T H E E N D

by

Jerry Belson

June 29, 1977

Rather than redoing the entire script, due to legal reasons, the name of "SONNY WILLIAMS" (part played by Burt Reynolds) will be changed to:

"WENDELL SONNY LAWSON"

In the script, wherever "SONNY" is used, keep "SONNY."

Wherever "WILLIAMS" is used, change to "LAWSON."

For your information, "WENDELL" will only be used once and that is already indicated in this script.

Please note that the last name change also applies to the following characters, wherever applicable.

JESSICA LAWSON

MAUREEN LAWSON

BEN LAWSON

JULIE LAWSON

T H E E N D

FADE IN:

1 INT. DOCTOR KRUGMAN'S OFFICE - CLOSEUP OF SONNY LAWSON - DAY 1

A guy in his late thirties who can look good, but currently looks like death (not even warmed over); expensive but slightly battered clothing, generally unkempt.

MUSIC AND TITLES BEGIN as Sonny stares blankly INTO THE CAMERA.

WIDEN ANGLE TO REVEAL DR. KRUGMAN, sitting patiently, wearing his most professional, brave-consoling smile at Sonny, waiting for him to absorb the bad news he has just been forced to give. As the silence continues, Dr. Krugman begins to get a little restless. His smile fades slightly as he looks at the work piled up on his desk... insurance forms, patient folders, lights flashing "hold" on his telephone. He looks back at Sonny who still hasn't moved. During all this, TITLE SONG AND CREDITS ARE INTERSPACED. Finally, the Doctor clears his throat loudly, holding his smile. This brings Sonny halfway out of his daze. Enough to say...

SONNY
It's the same thing Ali McGraw had in 'Love Story,' isn't it?

Now we SEE the TITLE... "THE END." MUSIC, TITLES and the SCENE CONTINUE...

DR. KRUGMAN
No, no. What you've got is a toxic blood disease. Miss McGraw had leukemia.

SONNY
Yeah, but I wind up the same way, don't I? Dead?

DR. KRUGMAN
I didn't say that, Mr. Lawson.

SONNY
You didn't say it because you're afraid to say it! C'mon, Dr. Krugman, you've got all the biopsies, the blood tests, the spinal taps.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

1 CONTINUED: 1

SONNY (CONT'D)
You're the third doctor I've been to. You guys can't keep making a living by referring me to each other. Now how much longer have I got?

DR. KRUGMAN
That's difficult to say.

SONNY
Try.

DR. KRUGMAN
There's always a chance that some doctor working in a lab somewhere will... will find a cure.

SONNY
Okay... ruling out miracles... how long?

DR. KRUGMAN
Well... I'd say a year at best.

SONNY
What's the worst?

DR. KRUGMAN
Well, I've seen some of these cases go in three months.

SONNY
Jesus, I knew I was sick but... how come I don't feel like I'm dying? I feel lousy but not like I'm dying. I thought it was good that I was losing weight. Everyone has been telling me how great I look.
(looks in mirror)
I look great.
(then)
How do I look?

DR. KRUGMAN
You're probably in a period of remission. People frequently take on an almost glowing quality... when... uh...

SONNY
... They're about to die.

(CONTINUED)

1 CONTINUED: (2) 1

DR. KRUGMAN
I wish you'd seen your own doctor sooner. Surely you must've started feeling ill quite some time ago.

SONNY
Yeah...
(patting his flat stomach in mirror)
But I thought I'd discovered a new diet... throwing up.
(then)
The pain is going to get worse, isn't it?

DR. KRUGMAN
(nods)
I'm afraid as the disease progresses, the pain will increase. How do you feel right now, Mr. Lawson?

SONNY
No headaches. On a scale of ten the pain in my stomach is about a six.

DR. KRUGMAN
There are drugs to combat the pain. We'll start some bone marrow injections, chemotherapy --
(a passing fancy)
-- perhaps we'll remove your spleen.

SONNY
You're not going to remove anything. That's it. I'm going to die with some dignity. I'm not going to tell anyone... not even Mom, Dad, Julie, my daughter.
(shuddering)
Tell me exactly what it will feel like... at the very end.

DR. KRUGMAN
You're not making this easy on me.

SONNY
Gee, I'm sorry.

DR. KRUGMAN
(giving it to him straight)
During the final stages, you'll have to be hospitalized.
(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

1 CONTINUED: (3) 1

DR. KRUGMAN (CONT'D)
You'll have shortage of breath, severe cramps, and hemorrhaging. X

SONNY
Will I have control over my bowels?

DR. KRUGMAN
(sighs)
No.

SONNY
Doc, you have to promise me one thing.

DR. KRUGMAN
Yes?

SONNY
A private room.

CUT TO:

2 INT. DOCTOR KRUGMAN'S RECEPTION ROOM 2

The NURSE and other patients are sitting in the outer offices. Sonny comes suddenly out, looking stricken as he passes the Nurse.

NURSE
Wait a minute. You're supposed to make another appointment.

Sonny exits the reception room without even hearing her, slamming the second door.

3 INT. MEDICAL BUILDING CORRIDOR 3

Sonny emerges in the hallway, glad to be alone with his trauma. He leans against the doctor's door and inhales deeply. His eye is caught by the legend on the door:

SAMUEL KRUGMAN, M.D., F.A.C.S., F.R.C.S. (Hon) X
HEMATOLOGIST

"A PROFESSIONAL CORPORATION"

SONNY
(bitter) X
Pronounced dead by a fucking X
corporation... X X

1 CONTINUED: (3) 1

DR. KRUGMAN (CONT'D)
You'll have shortage of breath, severe cramps, and rectal hemorrhaging.

SONNY
Will I have control over my bowels?

DR. KRUGMAN
(sighs)
No.

SONNY
Doc, you have to promise me one thing.

DR. KRUGMAN
Yes?

SONNY
A private room.

CUT TO:

2 INT. DOCTOR KRUGMAN'S RECEPTION ROOM 2

The NURSE and other patients are sitting in the outer offices. Sonny comes suddenly out, looking stricken as he passes the nurse.

NURSE
Wait a minute. You're supposed to make another appointment.

Sonny exits the reception room without even hearing her, slamming the second door.

3 INT. MEDICAL BUILDING CORRIDOR 3

Sonny emerges in the hallway, glad to be alone with his trauma. He leans against the doctor's door and inhales deeply. His eye is caught by the legend on the door:

SAUL KRUGMAN, M.D., F.A.C.S., F.R.C.S. (Hon)
HEMATOLOGIST

"A PROFESSIONAL CORPORATION"

(CONTINUED)

3 CONTINUED: 3

Sonny sniffles back his tears and pulls himself together. He walks bravely towards the elevator. A MAN arrives at the elevator the same time Sonny does and starts to push a button.

SONNY
Push the down button, will you?

MAN
(snotty)
I'm going up.

The guy starts to push the "UP" button. Sonny slams him against the wall, his eyes filling with tears again.

SONNY
Look, you asshole! I've got three months to live! You want me to waste the last precious moments of my life on a goddamn elevator?!

MAN
(getting the hell out of there)
I'll use the stairs.

The Man hurries off towards the stairs. Sonny presses the down button and the elevator arrives almost immediately. It's fairly full. Sonny gets in, trying to be brave and cheerful again.

4 INT. ELEVATOR 4

Sonny stares straight ahead, surrounded and alone. He suddenly turns to the wall and buries his face in his arms, muffling sobs. The elevator stops on the next floor to pick up a lady, and all the other people promptly get out. The lady who was about to get in also decides to pass this one up. The elevator doors slide closed. Sonny is now literally alone, but he is completely unaware of this. After a bit, the elevator stops and the doors open.

(CONTINUED)

4 CONTINUED: 4

Sonny hears LOBBY NOISES. He moves dumbly forward, keeping his face buried in his handkerchief as he waves blindly to push people out of the way.

SONNY
Excuse me... excuse me, please...
I'm a dying man.

Sonny can feel he's not touching anybody. He looks up and sees he is alone in the elevator. The people in the lobby are looking at him like he's nuts. Feeling foolish, he quickly exits the building.

5 EXT. MEDICAL BUILDING - DAY 5

Suddenly Sonny finds himself outside... BIRDS CHIRPING, sun shining, a beautiful day in the hills of Santa Barbara. All this makes him feel even worse. He looks up at the blue sky.

SONNY
Why me?
(then shrugs)
Why not me?

Sonny's attention is pulled to the highway.

6 SONNY'S POV 6

From the hillside, he can see a funeral cortege on the street; two motorcycle cops in the lead, followed by a black hearse and a procession of limousines.

7 BACK TO SCENE 7

Sonny becomes a man of purpose. He hurries to his battered, unwashed 1975 Jaguar sedan. There is a parking ticket on the windshield. Sonny rips the ticket up in pieces, jumps in and speeds out of the parking lot.

CUT TO:

8 EXT. STREET - ON FUNERAL PROCESSION - DAY 8

Sonny is ignoring the other cars in the procession, and oncoming traffic as he speeds to catch up with the hearse.

9 ON LIMOUSINES 9

To SEE the shocked faces of the mourners in the other cars as Sonny zips past them and pulls up even with the DRIVER of the hearse.

SONNY
(yells out window)
What'd he die of?

HEARSE DRIVER
(yells back)
What?

SONNY
The guy in back. What did he die of?

HEARSE DRIVER
(yells back)
Whatta you, crazy?! Go away.

SONNY
I just want to know what he died of.

HEARSE DRIVER
I don't know. But I know what you're gonna die of!

Sonny looks forward and sees a big truck coming toward him fast. He jams on the brakes and swerves into the spot between the hearse and the first black limousine, filled with the family of the deceased. The uniformed LIMO DRIVER almost crashes into the back of Sonny's car, and the mourning family in the back seat go flying forward to the floor. The Limo Driver applies his brakes, leans out and screams at Sonny.

LIMO DRIVER
I got the family of the deceased here! Have a little respect, you stupid bastard!

(CONTINUED)

9 CONTINUED: 9

Sonny realizes he's done a rotten thing. He swerves out of the line again and drops back until he's even with the occupants of the limo... a black clad widow, a grown-up son and daughter. The widow is weeping and wailing, the son is shaking his fist.

SONNY
(shouts)
I'm sorry. I'm dying, too.

The widow gives Sonny the finger with her black-gloved hand. This saddens him.

10 ANGLE ON MOTORCYCLE COP 10

He sees the confusion Sonny is causing and drops back next to him.

COP
Get out of here.

SONNY
I got as much right here as anybody else...
(pointing to coffin in back of hearse)
... except him.

Sonny is back in the wrong lane. A car comes the other way and has to swerve to avoid him, causing lots of screeching and confusion.

COP
All right! Pull over!

The Cop points to a dirt road at the side of the street and SIRENS Sonny's Jag over to it.

11 ANGLE ON CAR 11

Sonny gets out as the Cop gets off his motorcycle.

SONNY
Look, I had a very good reason for doing what I did.

COP
(not interested)
I'm sure. And I got a very good reason for giving you this ticket.

(CONTINUED)

11 CONTINUED: 11

The Cop pulls out his pad and pencil.

SONNY
Here. Let me save you some trouble.

Sonny takes the ticket the Cop is starting to write and tears it up.

SONNY
(continuing)
Tickets mean nothing to a man in my condition.

COP
(starting to write another ticket)
Okay, I'm adding drunk driving. And if you tear this ticket up...

SONNY
(almost enjoying this)
I will.

The Cop is a little frustrated, not knowing exactly how to handle this. His confusion is compounded by the SOUNDS of HONKING and TRAFFIC from the street.

12 COP'S POV 12

The funeral procession is a mess, mostly due to the havoc Sonny created. The hearse is stuck in the middle of an intersection, the car that swerved to avoid Sonny has hit a rail and is jamming up traffic coming the other way. The lone Cop on the street is off his motorcycle, trying to handle it all but it's too much. He sees our Cop and waves desperately for him to give him a hand.

13 BACK TO SCENE 13

The Cop writes down Sonny's license number as he climbs on his motorcycle.

COP
You haven't seen the last of me, buddy. I'll get your address and once I get this guy in the ground, I'm coming for you.

(CONTINUED)

13 CONTINUED: 13

SONNY
Better hurry.

The Cop drives off. Sonny is left alone. Suddenly, he is startled by the CLANGING of a LARGE BELL. He turns around.

14 HIS POV 14

He sees he is right next to the Santa Barbara Mission.

15 ON SONNY 15

He is a little awed to find himself in front of this beautiful church. The BELL continues TOLLING.

SONNY
(dramatically)
'Ask not for whom the bell tolls.
It tolls for thee.'

Miraculously, the cross atop the church casts a shadow across Sonny's face. Sonny heads for the church. X X

16 INT. SANTA BARBARA MISSION - DAY 16

A beautiful old Spanish place that is both a tourist attraction and a "working" church. A very young MAN with wire rimmed glasses is near the altar. Sonny comes up to him. X

SONNY
Excuse me, I'd like to see a priest.

PRIEST
I'm a priest.

Sonny reacts.

PRIEST
(continuing)
I really am. It's on my driver's license.

(CONTINUED)

16 CONTINUED: 16

The priest starts to look for his wallet. Sonny stops him.

SONNY
No. I believe you. It's just that you're so young.

PRIEST
I made a decision to serve God right after I got out of high school.

SONNY
(impressed)
You got a calling.

PRIEST
No, it was more like a whisper. Nothing like in the movies.

SONNY
Oh...

PRIEST
If you'd like an older priest...

SONNY
No, no... you'll be fine.
(solemnly)
I'd like you to hear my confession.

PRIEST
Really? Gee, I haven't heard many confessions. In fact, you'd be my first... in the field, I mean. We practiced on friends at the seminary but we all had such crummy little sins, barely worth confessing. Maybe you should have a priest with more experience. Father O'Hara will be here this afternoon. He's old.

SONNY
No, no! I can't wait.
(emphatic)
This is my last confession. I'm a dying man.

PRIEST
Dying?

16 CONTINUED: (2) 16

SONNY
Dying.

PRIEST
(a beat; then)
A lot of people say Father O'Hara looks just like Barry Fitzgerald ... you know, kindly... a little twinkle in his eye.

SONNY
(clutches Priest's hand)
Please! I need help now!

Priest looks in Sonny's eyes and can see he does need help.

PRIEST
Certainly.

SONNY
(relieved)
Thank you. It's hard to call you 'Father'...
(looks at kid; it's tough to add:)
... Father.

The Priest begins leading the way to the confessional.

PRIEST
You can call me Dave if it's more comfortable.

SONNY
Thank you, Dave.

The Priest opens the door for Sonny.

PRIEST
After you.

Sonny exits into his side of the cabinet and kneels. The Priest closes the door, heaves a sigh, looks to Heaven and crosses himself before he enters his side of the booth.

17 INT. CONFESSIONAL BOOTH - ON SONNY 17

He hears the DOOR OPEN and the little veiled window between he and the Priest opens.

(CONTINUED)

17 CONTINUED: 17

(INTERCUT between Priest and Sonny... or not, when it's funnier O.S.)

SONNY
Bless me, Dave, for I have sinned...
(stops)
Dave?

PRIEST
Yes.

SONNY
I think I'd rather call you 'Father.'

PRIEST
Fine.

SONNY
(starts over)
Bless me, Father, for I have sinned.

PRIEST
How long has it been since your last confession?

SONNY
It's been twenty-two years since my last confession.

PRIEST
Jesus Christ!
(quickly adding)
Son of our Lord, blessed member of the Holy Trinity. Boy, that's a long time. I was kinda hoping one of us would be good at this. Uh... Why have you stayed away from God's house so long?

SONNY
I don't know. I sort of stopped going to church when I discovered fu... uh, sex.

PRIEST
That's when we lose a lot of them.

SONNY
But I still believe in God.
(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

17 CONTINUED: (2) 17

SONNY (CONT'D)
I mean, I'm still scared of Him, so I must still believe in Him, right?

PRIEST
Well, it's rather an odd way of stating your faith. But it is faith of a kind.

SONNY
That's right! I still have faith! And even if I don't, it can't hurt to make a last confession and do a little penance. Just in case there is a heaven and hell, I mean, it's like covering yourself both ways.

PRIEST
We're talking about God, not craps.

SONNY
(sadly)
Yeah. I got the wrong attitude. This isn't going to do any good. That's why I quit praying. I figured if I didn't believe it... He wouldn't either.

PRIEST
We all lack faith sometimes. Every day I have questioned if I made the right decision... becoming a priest.

SONNY
Every day??

PRIEST
Every day since I was ordained. Being a priest can keep a person from committing sin but it can't keep a person from lusting after women, craving alcohol and dreaming of screwing a business partner...

SONNY
Hey! This is my dime. Do you mind if I tell you my sins?

(CONTINUED)

17 CONTINUED: (3) 17

PRIEST
I'm sorry. Please continue

SONNY
Fine. Bless me, Father, for I have sinned. Among my grievous sins are... uh... is jacking off still a sin? That used to be my biggie in the old days when I went to confession.

PRIEST
Is that still your biggie?

SONNY
(growing solemn)
What bothers me most is that I've been a lousy father to my daughter, Julie. X X X

PRIEST
Yes?

SONNY
I don't want to talk about it.
(then)
Oh, another thing I have to get off my chest, Father. A mortal sin.

PRIEST
Yes?

SONNY
I sell real estate.

PRIEST
That's a sin?

SONNY
The way I do it, it is. Oh, and another one... All during my marriage, while I was ignoring my daughter, I was out fu... copulating around with other women.

PRIEST
You committed adultery during your marriage?

(CONTINUED)

17 CONTINUED: (4) 17

SONNY
Yes, I did, Father.

PRIEST
About how many times?

SONNY
Well... we were married eight years. I'd say about...
(counting fingers)
... two hundred times.

PRIEST
Jesus Christ!
(quickly adding)
Son of our Lord, Blessed Member of the Holy Trinity. Two hundred times?

SONNY
Yeah.
(laughs)
How many 'Hail Mary's' do I have to say to make up for that?

There is a long silence from the other side. Sonny stops laughing.

SONNY
(continuing)
Father... what are you doing?

PRIEST
(frantically thumbing through a manual)
I'm looking it up.

Sonny reacts.

18 INT. CHURCH - ON CONFESSIONAL 18

Sonny comes out of the booth, this obviously isn't going to work for him. The Priest comes out of his side, looking apologetic. Sonny ignores him and crosses out of the church, stopping in front of the altar to kneel, make a quick sign of the cross and wave bye-bye to God.

19 INT. CHURCH - ANOTHER ANGLE 19 X

Sonny reacts, then moves up the aisle looking at the crucifix and all the prayer candles. X X

(CONTINUED)

19 CONTINUED: 19

He kneels on an impulse and a shaft of light illuminates his bowed head.

19A CLOSE SHOT OF SONNY 19A

The glowing candles of the chandelier make an iridescent back light on Sonny's head. Sonny is obviously trying desperately to pray, then gives up and leans back in defeat.

The young Priest appears over his shoulder. Sonny becomes aware of his presence and looks up helplessly. The Priest tries a reassuring smile, but it just doesn't quite make it.

PRIEST
Giving up so quickly?

SONNY
I don't think it's gonna work...

PRIEST
I wish there was something I could do or say. I guess I wasn't much help, was I?

SONNY
(pats Priest on the shoulder)
Hang in there, Father... you're gonna do all right.

Sonny is gone, leaving the Priest bathed in the shaft of light streaming through the glass window as we...

CUT TO:

20 EXT. SANTA BARBARA COTTAGE HOSPITAL 20

Driving aimlessly around, not knowing or caring where he's going. Suddenly, he notices he's driving right past a hospital. He pulls the Jag into the Doctors' parking lot and parks haphazardly, taking up a couple of spaces. He hurries towards the hospital, starting to look a little tired. A sharp pain hits him in the gut.

SONNY
(grunts)
A seven...

(MORE)

20 CONTINUED: 20

SONNY (CONT'D)
(winces)
Maybe an eight.

He tries shaking off the pain as he heads into a side entrance of the hospital.

21 INT. HOSPITAL CORRIDOR 21

Sonny enters. Various doctors, orderlies, etc., are going about their business. Sonny stops a BLACK GUY in a high-fashion white on white outfit who is carrying trays of food.

SONNY
Where are the patients who are dying?

BLACK
Everywhere.

SONNY
No. I mean do they keep the terminal cases in one special place?

BLACK
I dunno, man. I ain't no doctor. I'm a singer. I just work here part-time.
(sings)
You make me feel like dancing X
... Gonna dance the night away. X X

You make me feel like dancing X
... Gonna dance the night away. X X

SONNY
(reaching out)
I gotta know. I'm dying. I've got two months to live.

(CONTINUED)

21 CONTINUED: 21

BLACK
(yanking trays away)
Don't touch the food! Look up on the third floor. None of those folks look like they're leaving this place. Least not out the front door.

Sonny rushes up the staircase. X
X

22 INT. HOSPITAL CORRIDOR - THIRD FLOOR 22 X

Sonny rushes up from the staircase out onto a floor that is strangely quiet. He begins moving down the hallway, passing a variety of human wrecks parked in wheelchairs outside their rooms, being kept alive by tubes, wires and their insurance policies. Each one looks worse than the next. Sonny smiles, waves and tries to be cheery as he passes them. X

SONNY
(muttering to self)
I've stumbled onto the World Series of Sickness.

A NURSE comes out from behind a partition at the nurse's station, startling Sonny.

NURSE
Can I help you?

SONNY
Oh... Ah, I'm here to visit one of the patients.

NURSE
Which one?

SONNY
The sickest one.

NURSE
Oh, Mr. Welch. Thank God he finally got a visitor. Are you a member of the family?

(CONTINUED)

22 CONTINUED: 22

SONNY
Oh, yes. I'm his nephew. We're very close.
(looks around cubicles)
Which one is he?

NURSE
(busy)
The far bed.

X

23 INT. HOSPITAL BED - AN OLD MAN IN BED 23

He is deathly white, surrounded by about a quarter of a million dollars worth of "life" support apparatus, tubes up his nose, tubes in his arms, wires on his heart. A really frightening sight. He turns to see Sonny and say hello. His voice is very weak, but he makes an attempt at being friendly.

OLD MAN
Hi, Doc.

SONNY
Uh... hi. How are you feeling?

OLD MAN
Yesterday was shitty. Today's been better. It's up to lousy.

Sonny goes to the man's bedside.

SONNY
Did you pass the night without too much pain?

OLD MAN
(eyeing Sonny)
You're not a doctor, are you?

SONNY
No.

OLD MAN
(proud of himself)
I knew it. You were only doing one thing at once.

SONNY
Huh?

(CONTINUED)

23 CONTINUED: 23

OLD MAN
A real doctor always does at least two things at once. They ask you how you are while they poke you somewhere. They take your temperature while they check your chart. Always two things.

SONNY
You're right. I'm not a doctor. The truth is... uh... my wife... is very sick. She may have to come to a place like this. I... I just wanted to see...

OLD MAN
(finishing it for him)
How bad it was.

SONNY
Yes. I'm sorry... it was rude of me to just burst in.

OLD MAN
(no big deal)
Nobody knocks around here.

SONNY
Do you mind telling me what your illness is?

OLD MAN
I swear to God... it keeps changing. Every time I get a new pain, they come up with a new name for it. No new cures, just new names.

SONNY
I'm sure the doctors will...

OLD MAN
No, no. They tried everything. It's almost over...

A cough racks his body. Sonny shudders.

OLD MAN
(continuing)
... thank God.

The Old Man lies back, groaning in pain.

(CONTINUED)

23 CONTINUED: (2) 23

SONNY
Can I do anything for you?

The Old Man shakes his head "no." Sonny grows frustrated, almost angry.

SONNY
(continuing)
Jesus. Don't you ever feel like just ripping off all this shit?

OLD MAN
Every day. But I haven't got the guts... or the strength.

SONNY
You could ask a friend.

OLD MAN
I wouldn't want to saddle anybody with the knowledge they caused my death.

SONNY
How about your wife?

OLD MAN
I wouldn't give her the satisfaction.

The Old Man lies back, very tired. Sonny feels guilty about tiring him but he wants to know more.

SONNY
There is one other thing I'd like to ask you. I hope it's not too personal.

OLD MAN
After four months of having a nurse change your diapers, nothing is too personal.

SONNY
Well, I just wondered what it's like.

OLD MAN
What what's like?

SONNY
Uh... what you're doing now.

(CONTINUED)

23 CONTINUED: (3) 23

OLD MAN
You mean dying?

Sonny can't quite bring himself to say the word but he nods "yes."

OLD MAN
(continuing)
Well, I could bullshit you but I guess you didn't come up here for bullshit so let me tell you dying stinks! It hurts, it's embarrassing, and it's expensive. It's not a good thing. They get you in the hospital and stick a tube in every hole God gave you. After that, they start making their own holes!

SONNY
But what about day to day... hour to hour. I mean, is that any different from one day to the next?

OLD MAN
Hmmmm...
(he has to think about this, then...)
A lot depends what's on TV.

The Old Man is exhausted now. He leans back and closes his eyes. Sonny stares at this shell being kept alive... Sonny's personal Ghost of Christmas Future.

CUT TO:

23A INT. HOSPITAL LOBBY 23A

Sonny comes running down the stairwell, into the main hospital lobby. Some of the people are sick but it's positively comforting compared to upstairs. He searches around for a phone and finds one, but it's being used by a young GUY in a patient gown, who is up and active, pushing his portable TV unit. Sonny impatiently waits for the Guy to get off the phone.

(CONTINUED)

23A CONTINUED: 23A

GUY
(into phone)
Nawww, I feel fine. They're feeding me intravenously just to build up my strength...

Sonny tries to make himself visible to the Guy but he ignores Sonny, turning his back on him and hustling the chick on the phone.

GUY
(continuing)
And I'm gonna need my strength for Saturday night, right, baby? Give me a little talk... give me a little lovey talk... Yeah... Yeah... more of the heavy breathing... X X X X

The Guy starts making out with the phone. Sonny surreptitiously turns off the Guy's IV as he continues to talk.

GUY
(continuing)
Yeah... that's it... X
(then suddenly he gets tired) X
Listen, honey, I don't feel so good. I think I'm going back to bed.

He hangs up and shuffles off. Sonny turns the Guy's IV tube back on as he passes, then picks up the phone, deposits money and dials.

SONNY
(into phone)
Hello, Darleen. Where's Marty? Where at lunch? I don't care what he said, I have to see him! I have less than twenty-four hours to live! Casa Vega? Thanks. I'll see you... well, maybe I won't. 'Bye.

He hangs up and hurries out of the hospital.

CUT TO:

24 OMITTED 24

25 INT. MEXICAN RESTAURANT - A FEW MINUTES LATER - ON BOOTH 25

MARTY, a sharply dressed lawyer about Sonny's age, is sitting at the bar of a cozy little Mexican joint, sipping Margaritas with a hot young thing named SUZY. X

MARTY
Filing for a divorce can be a very rough experience emotionally. I've always felt a lawyer should be at his client's side not only in the courtroom but wherever she might need him... at her home, the beach, my place.

SUZY
I just want to make sure I get every cent I can out of Henry. I want to squeeze his balls dry.

MARTY
(taking her hand)
He must've hurt you very badly.

26 ANGLE ON ENTRANCE 26

Sonny comes bursting in, looking around for Marty, a little wild-eyed. Marty sees him and is less than thrilled, sort of turning his back. But Sonny spots him and comes rushing over.

27 ANGLE ON BAR 27 X

SONNY
Marty, I have to talk to you.

MARTY
I'm in a business meeting.

SONNY
Forget your cock. I'm in real trouble. X X

MARTY
(turns to Suzy)
I'm sorry, Miss Bishop. An old friend of mine. He takes liberties.

(CONTINUED)

27 CONTINUED: 27

SONNY
(ignoring girl)
Marty, I'm going to turn into a vegetable who shits all over himself!

Suzy quickly gets up on this.

SUZY
Well, you two friends chat. I have to get my legs waxed.

MARTY
(gets up)
Wait, Miss Bishop...

He starts to follow her but Sonny grabs his arm.

MARTY
(continuing)
Sonny, what the hell are you doing? That woman represents ten thousand dollars worth of business to my firm.
(points)
And look at that ass!

Marty shakes loose and starts to go after her.

SONNY
Marty, I'm dying. I could go any second.

MARTY
(this stops him)
What? What the hell are you talking about?

SONNY
I'm talking about dying.

MARTY
What does that mean?

SONNY
Dying means lying in the ground with a lot of dirt on top of you and holding your breath forever.

(CONTINUED)

27 CONTINUED: (2) 27

MARTY
I know what dying means. But what's it got to do with you?

SONNY
It's going to happen to me. I went to a doctor today. He told me I was dying.

MARTY
(not wanting to believe it)
They'll say anything to keep you coming.

SONNY
No, no... it's true. I've got a toxic blood disease. I've known something was wrong for the last couple of months. I've been having terrible pains in my stomach and my chest. I'm nauseous and weak all the time.

MARTY
I'm your best friend! Why didn't you tell me?

SONNY
I tell you every time I see you. The last time I was in your office, I threw up on your desk.

Marty realizes Sonny is telling the truth, and the whole thing sinks in on him.

MARTY
(softer)
Sonny... Sonny... what can I do?

SONNY
I want you to help me make sure my insurance policies and will and stuff are in good order. I want to be sure everything is set for Jessica and Julie.
(angry at himself)
I wish I hadn't pissed away the last three years. If I spent more time at the office, there'd be more to leave Julie.

(CONTINUED)

27 CONTINUED: (3) 27

MARTY
C'mon, Sonny. Get hold of yourself. You talk like you're going to die tomorrow.

SONNY
(shaking head)
I'm going to die tonight.

Marty doesn't understand. Sonny explains.

SONNY
(continuing)
Marty, you're my lawyer and my best friend. I'm telling you this 'cause I got to tell somebody. I don't want to wind up in some hospital, curled up in pain, being kept alive by Blue Cross and electricity.
(dramatically)
Marty, I'm going to commit suicide.

This is more than Marty can handle. He sits there in stunned silence, then picks up the menu, trying to block the whole thing out.

MARTY
Whatta you think, Sonny? The enchilada plate?

Sonny yanks the menu away.

SONNY
Marty? Did you hear me? I'm going to...

MARTY
(interrupting)
Yeah! Yeah! I heard you. Now I know it's all a big joke...
(hopefully)
Right?

SONNY
No. I thought the whole thing over. I'm going to die anyway and I don't want to live in all this pain. I'm going to knock myself off. All it takes is a little guts to...

(CONTINUED)

27 CONTINUED: (4) 27

MARTY
(furious)
Guts?! You think running out on Jessie and Julie is a gutsy thing to do?

SONNY
You bet! At least they'll collect some big insurance money instead of bankrupting themselves trying to keep me alive... preserving me like a Goddamn pickle!

MARTY
You think you're real smart, don't you? But you forgot one thing... your life insurance policy doesn't pay off on suicides. All the majors have a no payoff clause on suicides. Ha, ha, ha...

Marty laughs slowly and deliberately at Sonny. Sonny grows very quiet and grim. Marty's laugh becomes hollow and he grows worried...

MARTY
(continuing)
Sonny...

Sonny doesn't say anything. He stares dumbly ahead ... then covers his face with his hands and remains motionless.

MARTY
(continuing)
Sonny... Sonny, please stop. I can't see what you're doing under there. Are you crying, Sonny?
(growing desperate, picks up menu)
Whatta ya think, the enchilada plate. Sonny, you won't be able to eat with your hands in front of your face.

He throws menu down. His friend's pain is unbearable to him.

MARTY
(continuing)
Sonny... Sonny... What should I do?

(CONTINUED)

27 CONTINUED: (5) 27

Sonny uncovers his face. It's hard to tell if he's been crying.

SONNY
I'm okay, Marty. 'Bye...

Sonny gets up but Marty grabs his arm.

MARTY
Wait!
(a beat)
Are you really in pain all the time?

SONNY
Yeah. I'll call you later.

MARTY
(quickly)
I was lying about the insurance.

SONNY
What?

MARTY
Yeah... that suicide thing only applies during the first two years of a policy. They don't want guys signing up and then killing themselves right away for the money.

SONNY
You mean it?

MARTY
Yeah... you been with 'em ten years. You can do any Goddamn thing you want to yourself and they'll still pay you.

SONNY
Thanks, Marty. I'll see you, old buddy.

They shake hands. Marty can't let go.

MARTY
Wait a minute. Eat with me, Sonny.

(CONTINUED)

27 CONTINUED: (6) 27

SONNY
I haven't got much of an appetite.

MARTY
Have an enchilada. It couldn't kill you.
(realizes)
I'm sorry. I... I'll make sure Jessie and Julie... make sure they have everything.

SONNY
I know, I know.

MARTY
How are you going to... do... do... do...

SONNY
Sleeping pills. It's the most painless. The only trouble is I haven't got any. Do you?

MARTY
Just some Sleep-Eze. I don't think you can O.D. on Sleep-Eze.

SONNY
That's okay. I'll find some.

Sonny wants to go, but Marty still can't let go of him.

SONNY
(continuing)
I really have to go, Marty. I want to go over to Mary Ellen's place and say goodbye.

MARTY
Sure, pal.

Marty lets go. Sonny sticks out his hand to shake goodbye. Marty shakes his old friend's hand then turns it into an embrace. They break.

MARTY
(continuing)
Goodbye, Sonny.

SONNY
Goodbye, Marty.

(CONTINUED)

27 CONTINUED: (7) 27

Sonny goes off. Marty's eyes fill with tears. He wipes them away and tries to study the menu. Suddenly, Sonny appears back at the booth.

SONNY
(continuing)
One more thing, Marty...

MARTY
(slamming down menu)
Jesus, Sonny! You're really putting me through a wringer here.

SONNY
(ignoring)
I want you to pay off the Jag, sell it and give the money to Mary Ellen. My equity's worth about three thousand bucks. She deserves something for all the shit she's put up with being my old lady.

MARTY
Sure, sure... anything, Sonny.

SONNY
'Bye.

Sonny starts off again. Marty grabs him again.

MARTY
Sonny, I just want you to know that I understand what you're doing. As a friend and a lawyer I believe you have a legal and moral right to die any way you choose.

SONNY
Thanks for understanding.

MARTY
(grabbing Sonny and yelling)
Don't do it, Sonny!
(to crowd)
Stop this man! He's about to...

(CONTINUED)

27 CONTINUED: (8) 27

Sonny covers Marty's mouth and pushes him back in the booth, smiling at the crowd who go back to their burritos.

SONNY
Now be my real friend and when I uncover your mouth just wave goodbye.

Sonny is suddenly hit with a sharp pain and needs both hands to hold himself up, forcing him to take his hand off Marty's mouth. Marty remains silent. Sonny recovers and straightens himself. He looks at Marty. Marty waves a small goodbye. Sonny smiles, waves 'bye-bye,' and exits. Marty stares hard at the menu. After a beat, a waitress comes over with pencil poised.

MARTY
(tight, to waitress)
So... so whatta you think... the enchilada plate?

CUT TO:

28 EXT. MEXICAN RESTAURANT - ANGLE ON CURB - DAY 28

Sonny's car is parked in a red zone and there's a ticket on the windshield. He tears the ticket up as he gets in the car. As he pulls away:

SONNY
That's it... Marty's the last person I'm laying my shit on. I'm not telling Mary Ellen I'm dying.

CUT TO:

29 EXT. MARY ELLEN'S HOUSE - DAY 29

Sonny's Jag is parked right in front of a small house in a funky section of town. From inside the house, we HEAR A GIRL SOBBING.

MARY ELLEN (O.S.)
(through sobs)
No, Sonny! No!

30 INT. MARY ELLEN'S HOUSE - CLOSE ON MARY ELLEN 30

Her face streaked with tears.

MARY ELLEN
It can't be true! Please, no!

The CAMERA BEGINS PANNING and we SEE Sonny is with MARY ELLEN in her darkened combination living room and bedroom. The shades are drawn but we can SEE through filtered sunlight that the room is a disaster area: broken down bed supported at one end by telephone books; papers, sheet music, guitar, old plates and old food everywhere. Two cats (one a kitten) prowl about the room and eat off the bed. An empty six-pack is nearby. The overall impression is that Mary Ellen is not a born homemaker.

Despite a slovenliness of her surroundings, or maybe because of it, Mary Ellen stands out as a scrubbed, fresh, All-American beauty, as spotless as her surroundings are filthy. As we PAN around the mini-slum Mary Ellen continues weeping while Sonny bravely holds and consoles her.

MARY ELLEN
(continuing)
Your life can't be over... our past, our future, our memories. X
All the beautiful things we shared in this apartment...

Sonny looks around the room, trying hard to remember one. Mary Ellen, dressed in a rather cheap but sexy Oriental nightgown that is half open, continues crying her eyes out. Sonny is genuinely sorry now that he told her. He is hugging and petting her, trying to console her, trying to be unselfish... but getting a hard-on as he peers over a golden pagoda at her tits.

SONNY
Don't cry, honey. I'm sorry I told you. Don't cry, girl. Hell, I don't even care that much.

This makes her cry more.

SONNY
(continuing)
Baby... come on...

He begins kissing the tears off her cheek. Then he begins kissing her just for the hell of it; moving from her cheek to her neck to her shoulders, opening her pajamas and kissing her belly, then moving down her legs.

30 CONTINUED: 30

We HOLD on Mary Ellen's tearful face as Sonny vanishes OUT OF FRAME. Mary Ellen suddenly stops crying, a surprised look on her face. She looks down to see Sonny has opened Mary Ellen's nightgown ever more and is occupied under the folds of silk.

MARY ELLEN
Sonny... please... not now.

Sonny comes out from under the nightgown.

SONNY
This could be my last meal.

MARY ELLEN
(horrified, screams)
You're... sick!!

She jumps up off the bed, almost yanking Sonny's head off in the process.

SONNY
It was just a joke.

MARY ELLEN
A terrible one! You're using your death!

SONNY
(disgusted with himself)
Yeah... I guess I was going for a pity fuck.

MARY ELLEN
(pitying him)
Oh, Sonny.

She throws her arms around him, her nightgown coming open. He begins stroking and comforting her as he lays her down on the bed... and slips off his shoes.

SONNY
It was a stupid idea.

He surreptitiously kicks the kitten off the bed as they begin serious passion amidst the debris. Somehow (hopefully with the help of Paul Williams) we depict a kind of bittersweet fuck; Sonny desperate to make Mary Ellen happy; Mary Ellen desperate to make him happy by <u>being</u> happy. They come close to joy but never quite hit it.

(CONTINUED)

30 CONTINUED: (2) 30

Mary Ellen is a little remote, perhaps secretly taking a swig of warm beer while Sonny's attention is elsewhere, stroking the older cat while Sonny makes love to her.

DISSOLVE TO:

31 INT. KITCHEN - A LITTLE LATER - AFTER THE BALL IS OVER 31

Mary Ellen's kitchen makes the bedroom look neat. The table is overflowing with typing papers, books, typewriter, half-eaten TV dinners, unidentifiable green lumps, dirty laundry, clean laundry and the cats. Sonny is wearing Mary Ellen's Japanese kimono as he tries to clear a space on the kitchen counter for he and Mary Ellen to eat on. She is making a Sara Lee cake in the oven but the oven door is half off its hinges so the whole business is a bit of a struggle. Sonny is obviously uncomfortable in the messiness as he steps over some old cat food to the icebox. He gets out a quart of milk and smells it. (NOTE: Mary Ellen pours herself and drinks a couple of glasses of cheap wine during this scene.)

SONNY
(making a face)
How old is this milk?

MARY ELLEN
I bought it at the market yesterday.

SONNY
(smells it again)
Then they must've got it from a dead cow.
(puts the milk back)
How about sugar? You got any without ants?

MARY ELLEN
There's some on the table.

Sonny regards the messy table.

SONNY
Loose or in a bowl?

MARY ELLEN
Sonny, why are you being mean?

(CONTINUED)

31 CONTINUED: 31

SONNY
I don't know. I guess the news of my death put me in a bad mood.

Mary Ellen comes over and hugs Sonny, stroking his hair. Sonny tries to relax; he wants to be comforted but he can't. He breaks away and goes over to the oven.

SONNY
(continuing)
How are the rolls coming?

Mary Ellen opens the oven door and touches the cinnamon rolls.

MARY ELLEN
They feel done. It's hard to tell with this stove.

SONNY
Mary Ellen, the landlord would fix the stove if you'd ask him. He might throw you out when he saw this place, but he'd fix the stove.

MARY ELLEN
I'm going to call him.

Mary Ellen has set the rolls down on the counter and is getting some paper towels and a knife. One of the cats has come over and is sniffing the rolls. Sonny knocks the cat onto the floor. Mary Ellen is angry, but controls it. She gives the cat a little pat and begins cutting and serving the rolls. They both stand quietly at the sink, drinking coffee and eating rolls. After a beat:

SONNY
How was it in there?

He gestures toward the bed.

MARY ELLEN
It felt good.

SONNY
(this isn't enough)
Did you come?

This is an old and sore point with them. Mary Ellen shakes her head "no."

31 CONTINUED: (2) 31

SONNY
(continuing)
There was a moment there... you let out a little gasp and sort of arched your back. I thought maybe you had an orgasm then.

Mary Ellen shakes her head "no" again.

SONNY
(continuing)
Don't you remember, honey? You arched your back. It was just before...

MARY ELLEN
I don't want a blow-by-blow description of our lovemaking ... it takes everything away from it.

SONNY
Yeah, you're right...
(takes a sip of coffee)
Maybe you had a little orgasm and didn't even know it.

MARY ELLEN
It's possible.

After a long beat:

SONNY
No, it's not. Did you at least like it?

MARY ELLEN
Of course I liked it, Sonny. I wouldn't do it if I didn't like it.

He looks at her and knows she's telling the truth.

SONNY
Yeah, that's the difference between you and me. I've done it to people I didn't like. I've done it to people nobody liked.

(CONTINUED)

31 CONTINUED: (3) 31

Mary Ellen laughs and grabs Sonny. She kisses him and Sonny is pleased. They stand and hold each other... but Sonny gets blue again.

SONNY
(continuing)
You know, the least you could do for a dying man is come.

MARY ELLEN
Sonny, don't...

SONNY
You just can't give, Mary Ellen. You can't commit. You've said so yourself.

Mary Ellen is about to cry.

MARY ELLEN
Please stop, Sonny. What can I do?

SONNY
What any decent woman would do... lie to me.

MARY ELLEN
I can't lie to you. That's why you love me.

SONNY
The basic problem is I love you more than you love me. That's it... that's always been it.
(begins pacing)
That's why you won't live with me; that's why you won't come; that's why you won't clean up your kitchen!

MARY ELLEN
(yells)
Sonny, why are you doing this? Why are you saying things to make me unhappy?

SONNY
Because you make me unhappy! Screwing you is like masturbating.

(CONTINUED)

31 CONTINUED: (4) 31

MARY ELLEN
Then why do you keep coming here, Sonny? I've told you exactly how I feel. Why do you keep coming here?

Sonny suddenly seems to lose his anger, even his interest, in this whole discussion.

SONNY
(shrugs)
I don't know. Maybe I love jacking off.
(then)
Well. I gotta go, honey.

MARY ELLEN
Go where?

SONNY
I want to see Julie once before...

He stops himself.

MARY ELLEN
Before what??

SONNY
Before... I have to tell her the bad news.

MARY ELLEN
You told me you haven't decided whether to tell Julie or not.

SONNY
(squirming, defensive)
Look, I just had a traumatic experience and I want to see my kid.

MARY ELLEN
Don't get mad at me, Sonny. I just wanted to make sure you weren't thinking of doing something crazy...

SONNY
Like what?

(CONTINUED)

31 CONTINUED: (5) 31

MARY ELLEN
(afraid to voice her fears)
I... I don't know. Just, please, don't do anything crazy.

SONNY
I won't.
(heading for the bedroom)
Say, where's that gun I gave you to protect yourself?

MARY ELLEN
(scared)
Sonny!

SONNY
I was just kidding.

MARY ELLEN
Well, you're not funny.

SONNY
Yes, I am.

MARY ELLEN
No, you're not.

Sonny does something funny... crosses his eyes, lifts the nightgown like a little girl... something that makes Mary Ellen laugh. She grabs him and hugs him.

SONNY
I gotta change clothes, honey. It embarrasses the kid when I pick her up in women's clothes.

MARY ELLEN
I don't know. I just hate to let go of you.
(then)
Will I see you here later tonight?

SONNY
Uh... Yeah. Sure.

MARY ELLEN
(doesn't believe him)
Sonny... You're sure you're not going to... do anything... to yourself?

31 CONTINUED: (6) 31

SONNY
Honey, I am not going to kill myself. You know me. If I was going to do something awful like that, I would've laid it on you by now.

MARY ELLEN
That's true.

CUT TO:

32 EXT. JESSICA'S HOUSE - MINUTES LATER 32

Sonny pulls the Jag up in front of a lovely house on a lovely cul-de-sac street. The trouble is, it really is lovely and this is where Sonny lived for nine years. He walks up to the house...

33 ANGLE ON FRONT DOOR 33

... tries the door without knocking. It's locked. He gropes around on a ledge for the key and finds it.

SONNY
(sighs)
I hope Jessie isn't home.
(shaking head)
Divorced three years and the broad is still totally crazy about me.

He opens the door and enters.

CUT TO:

34 INT. JESSICA'S HOUSE - DAY 34

As nice as the outside, slightly feminine in decor and very neat, not many traces of Sonny left. The house seems to be empty as Sonny enters and looks around.

SONNY
(calls)
Hello!

(CONTINUED)

34 CONTINUED: 34

FOOTSTEPS, and down the stairs comes the ex-Mrs. Lawson, JESSICA. She is dressed up, ready to go on an afternoon date and looks great. She reacts when she sees Sonny standing meekly at the bottom of the stairs.

JESSICA
Oh, shit.

SONNY
Hi, Jessie. Where's Julie?

JESSICA
The same place she's been every Wednesday afternoon for the last five years, ballet class. Why don't you ever remember that?

SONNY
I didn't even remember it was Wednesday afternoon.

JESSICA
What do you want, Sonny? I'm about to go out on a date and I have to make Julie's dinner.

Jessie pushes past Sonny and heads for the kitchen. Sonny follows her.

35 and 36 OMITTED 35 and 36

37 INT. KITCHEN 37

Jessie moves quickly and precisely around the kitchen preparing a one dish meal and putting it in the micro-oven. Sonny follows her around from refrigerator to counter to sink to stove.

SONNY
Who are you going out with?

JESSICA
None of your business. What are you doing here?

(CONTINUED)

37 CONTINUED: 37

SONNY
I told you. I want to see Julie.
(trying to nuzzle her)
A date, huh? Since when do you like it in the afternoon?

JESSICA
(pushing him off)
Since I started working nights.

SONNY
(guilty)
So who told you to go to work?

JESSICA
The Bank of America. You think we can live in the style you got us accustomed to on your alimony? Which, by the way, you are six weeks behind on.

SONNY
I know, I know. Things have been a little slow at the office.

JESSICA
Maybe they'd speed up if you showed up there once in a while. They called here twice today looking for you. Have you told them you haven't lived here in three years?

SONNY
Yeah, yeah... you got any sleeping pills?

JESSICA
No. What do you need those things for? If you'd go on a healthy diet... cut out all the sugar and caffeine...

SONNY
If I cut out sugar and caffeine I'd starve. And don't give me lectures from classes you took on my money.

JESSICA
I was trying to help. But you relate everything to money.

(CONTINUED)

37 CONTINUED: (2) 37

SONNY
A little trick your lawyer taught me.

JESSICA
Get out.

She turns her back. Sonny is tired of fighting... he's suddenly tired of everything.

SONNY
I'm sorry, Jessie. I don't want to fight.

JESSICA
(surprised)
You don't?

She looks at Sonny. She can see he's really sick... This shuts her up.

JESSICA
(continuing)
What's wrong, Wendell?

He doesn't answer.

JESSICA
(continuing)
If you're really having trouble going to sleep, borrow a couple of pills from your folks... they're hypochondriacs.

SONNY
They are not! You'll say anything against them!
(then, once again it's his idea)
My folks will have downers.

JESSICA
(fed up)
Why did you come here?

SONNY
I want to talk to Julie. But... but I guess there is something I should tell you.

JESSICA
Will it depress me?

(CONTINUED)

37 CONTINUED: (3) 37

SONNY
I hope so.

JESSICA
Then tell me tomorrow. I've had a terrible day. Julie woke up at five o'clock in the morning screaming the shark was after her again.
(glares at him)
I'll never forgive you for taking her to that movie. You know she's afraid of the water anyway.

SONNY
I'm sorry, Jessica, honest. I thought she'd love it. She said she wanted to go.

JESSICA
Oh, Sonny, she'll say anything to look brave to you. You're so dumb.

SONNY
I am tired of being told I'm dumb by people I'm supporting.

JESSICA
Don't yell! The maid's taking a nap.

SONNY
(yelling)
I support her, too!

JESSICA
Sonny, if you wake Maria...

SONNY
Maria? I thought you fired Maria.

JESSICA
This is another Maria. Julie's yelling woke her up at five o'clock, too. Then Maria started crying because she thought it was the Department of Immigration. After that, I just hung around with nothing to do until seven o'clock when I had to take Julie to school.
(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

37 CONTINUED: (4) 37

JESSICA (CONT'D)
I got back here about eight-fifteen and Maria handed me a note from the washing machine man... he'd come to fix the washer, but nobody was home.

SONNY
Where was Maria?

JESSICA
She hides when anybody knocks at the door. Do you know how long I have been waiting for the washing machine man, Sonny? Six weeks. We have no clean clothes. Yesterday I sent Julie to school in some of your old things.
(raising arm of dress)
Smell this.

Sonny declines. Jessica continues her tirade.

JESSICA
(continuing)
I have waited days, weeks for this washing machine man. I've broken dates, missed appointments, I've even put out little snacks and candles for him. But he never comes... he never comes! Today I'm gone for a half hour at dawn and he shows up! When I got home and heard that, I laid down on the bed, wept openly and dreamt of moving to Patterson, New Jersey.

SONNY
What?

JESSICA
That's where the washing machine factory is. I figure they must have a few extra repairmen there... you know, trainees with spare time. If I lived near the factory maybe I could get one to run over on his lunch hour or something and fix the Goddamn machine!

She pushes Sonny aside and crosses to the kitchen to write a note.

38 ANGLE ON NOTE 38

She writes, "JULIE, CALL ME AT WORK WHEN YOU GET HOME. DINNER IN OVEN. HUGS, MOM" as they continue talking.

SONNY
You call that trouble. I'll tell you about trouble... About heartbreak...

JESSICA
Are you growing a beard?

SONNY
I've had it for three months. I grew it because some mornings I just don't have the strength to shave.

JESSICA
Go to a barber.

SONNY
You don't care one bit about me, do you?

JESSICA
No. Not since you walked out that door.

SONNY
I didn't walk out. You threw me out.

JESSICA
With two hookers!

SONNY
Jessie, I've apologized for that a thousand times. I thought you were out of town.
(adding)
We never got on our bed. I wouldn't do that to you.

JESSICA
Yeah, Sonny, you always had class.

There's a KNOCK at the front door.

JESSICA
There's my date.
(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

38 CONTINUED: 38

JESSICA (CONT'D)
(points to back door)
Get out!

SONNY
(grins)
No.

She snorts in disgust and exits the kitchen. Sonny nonchalantly follows.

A38 EXT. JESSICA'S HOUSE - DAY (ADDED SCENE) A38

LATIN LOVER pulls up in green Rolls Royce in front of Jessica's house. He looks into rearview mirror, brushes his hair, looks at himself, shows his teeth and smiles. He gets out of car and walks to front entrance. He rings doorbell, pauses, adjusts his clothes and waits in anticipation. As the door opens, he enters.

39 INT. LIVING ROOM 39

Jessie opens the front door, admitting a very well-dressed, collegiate looking young LATIN. She smiles at him, then looks back to see Sonny's reaction to her date, he is properly disgusted. She ignores Sonny.

JESSICA
(to date, in Spanish)
'Dejame coger mi sweter. Yo regreso ensequida.'
(pointing at Sonny)
'No prestes atencion a esa shmuck.'

She rushes up the stairs, passing Sonny.

JESSICA
(continuing; through her teeth)
Be civil or you'll pay.

She vanishes up the stairs. Sonny smiles and comes up to the Latin guy.

SONNY
Hi.

LATIN
Hi.

SONNY
I'm dying.

LATIN
'Yo no entiendo Ingles.'

SONNY
Oh?
(then)
You like screwing my wife?
(the guy, not understanding, shrugs)
That's the way I felt about it, too.

Jessie comes back down the stairs with a sweater on.

JESSICA
(to date, in Spanish)
'Esta bien vamos!'

(CONTINUED)

39 CONTINUED: 39

She starts to breeze out but Sonny stops her, taking her arm.

SONNY
I want to talk to you, Jessica.

JESSICA
(to date, in Spanish)
'Por favor, espera en el auto?'

Arthur nods politely and goes. Jessie turns to Sonny, tough.

JESSICA
(continuing)
Let go of me right now.

Sonny, kind of scared of her, lets go.

SONNY
Where are you and Pancho going... lunch at Taco Bell and a cock fight?

JESSICA
You are a racist ass and we are going to a French restaurant you'd never take me to. Then we're attending an est seminar.

SONNY
Bor-ring.

JESSICA
Not to me, Sonny. I'm trying to make my life a little better. It probably won't work but at least I'm trying.

SONNY
Where'd you meet this greaser?

JESSICA
That 'greaser' is the son of a wealthy Argentine diplomat, I met him in the English class and you are still a racist ass.

She tries to push by him but he stops her.

(CONTINUED)

39 CONTINUED: (2) 39

SONNY
And now the teacher is going to give her student a little tea and sympathy and jump his bones.

JESSICA
You are also a sexist ass.

SONNY
The guy's ten years younger than you. You look like his chaperone.

JESSICA
How dare you say that to me! You're going out with a girl who still plays jacks! Now get out of my way or I'll spit in your face!

SONNY
(afraid she's going to do it)
I... you wouldn't... I'm not finished talking to you -- I have some important news.

JESSICA
Get out of the way.

She sucks up saliva and puckers. She's going to spit if Sonny doesn't get out of the way. Sonny gets out of the way. She exits.

CAMERA MOVES INTO CLOSEUP of Sonny.

SONNY
At least I had the guts not to tell her.

CUT TO:

40 EXT. BALLET SCHOOL 40

Sonny pulls up in his Jag and looks around. He enters through the side door of the ballet school.

A40 EXT. BALLET SCHOOL A40X

Sonny's car is parked in front of Miss Agnes' School of Ballet.

41 INT. BALLET SCHOOL 41

Sonny walks through the back door of the ballet classroom.

(CONTINUED)

41 CONTINUED: 41

A group of teenage girls in leotards are watching two girls (one of them Sonny's daughter) doing a lovely dance. At first the dance is sweet and pretty but quickly it becomes very sensuous and sexy. The MUSIC BUILDS, the movements become even more erotic. The girls are doing grinds and bumps to BEETHOVEN'S FIFTH on a RECORD PLAYER. Sonny watches in utter fascination, at first pleased, then shocked as the dance gets more explicit. At one point, one girl looks like she's just about to actually penetrate Sonny's kid. Sonny looks, in disbelief, as the DANCE MISTRESS approaches him.

MISTRESS
May I help you?

SONNY
(to Dance Mistress)
That isn't ballet, it's smut.

MISTRESS
It happens to be a classic ballet ... 'The Legend of Lesbos.'

SONNY
I saw the same thing in the Navy.

MISTRESS
Break, girls.
(then)
Does anybody belong to this buffoon?

JULIE
(admits)
He's my dad.

MISTRESS
(patting her)
That's all right, dear.

SONNY
Julie, get your things. I want to talk to you.

JULIE
Anything wrong?

SONNY
No. Just get your things.

(CONTINUED)

41 CONTINUED: (2) 41

JULIE
Sure, Dad.

She smiles like a good girl but makes a fist and threatens her father so only he can see as she passes him.

After Julie is out of earshot:

(CONTINUED)

41 CONTINUED: (3) 41

SONNY
I'm not paying for my daughter to learn this stuff.

MISTRESS
You're certainly not. Her bill hasn't been paid in months.

SONNY
(turning quickly away)
You ready, honey?

He crosses to Julie.

CUT TO:

41A EXT. BALLET SCHOOL - ON ENTRANCE 41A

Julie follows her father outside, suspicious of the unexpected visit.

JULIE
What are you doing here in the middle of the afternoon?

Sonny notices a bunch of boys hanging around, leering at his daughter's budding breasts in the leotard.

SONNY
Haven't you got a coat or something you can wear over that thing?

JULIE
It's hot. Quit being silly.

SONNY
Okay. But let's go somewhere else.

JULIE
Not until you tell me what's wrong.

SONNY
Nothing's wrong. Just a father taking his daughter out for a chat. No big deal. Nothing special.

CUT TO:

42 EXT. MINIATURE GOLF COURSE - A LITTLE LATER - ON SONNY AND JULIE PLAYING 42

Julie has a coke, hot dog, popcorn, pennant and souvenir hat with "DADDY'S GIRL" freshly embroidered on it. She is so loaded down, she can barely make the putt she is working on.

SONNY
Want another cotton candy, honey?

JULIE
(garbled through the coke held in her teeth)
Uhh, uhhh.

She starts to putt again.

SONNY
How about a frozen banana?

She shakes her head 'no' and tries to concentrate. A couple of boys walk by and eye her in her leotard again.

SONNY
(continuing)
Are you sure you're not cold in that thing?

JULIE
(giving up on putt)
It's a hundred degrees out. If there's anything I'd like to take off, it's this hat.

SONNY
It's a nice hat.

JULIE
It makes me sound like a race horse. Why couldn't I write what I wanted on the hat?

SONNY
I am not going to buy you a hat with 'BITCH' on it.

JULIE
Dad -- why did you bring me here? I hate miniature golf.

(CONTINUED)

42 CONTINUED: 42

SONNY
You loved it the last time we played.

JULIE
That was six years ago.

SONNY
The game hasn't changed. Oh, the windmills and castles are a little fancier but...

JULIE
Daddy, I've changed.

Sonny looks at his daughter. She is a young woman.

SONNY
Yes, darlin'... you have. That's really what I wanted to talk to you about... being a woman.
(a deep breath, then)
Julie, you're at an age when boys are starting to notice you. In that outfit, winos are starting to notice you. It's time we had a talk about sex. Thirteen is a dangerous age.

JULIE
(tired of reminding him)
I'm fourteen.

SONNY
Fourteen is a dangerous age.

JULIE
You're forty.

SONNY
I'm thirty-nine. Anyway, it's time we had a talk about sex.

JULIE
Well, if you want to talk about sex, I know plenty.

SONNY
You do?

(CONTINUED)

42 CONTINUED: (2) 42

JULIE
Sure. I'm at the top of my class in sex education. I just got an 'A' on my paper on menstruation.

SONNY
(not thrilled)
That's nice. But I'm talking about another kind of sex.
(thinking hard)
I want to figure out exactly the right way to tell you this because I don't want to make you automatically suspicious of the opposite sex the rest of your life.
(thinks some more, then)
Julie, all boys, and that includes men, are filthy, rotten beasts with only one thing on their minds. They'll lie, cheat, commit violence... anything to get you in bed... then they'll dump all over you.

JULIE
You're not like that.

SONNY
Yes I am. If you don't believe me, ask your mother.

JULIE
Well, I'm not Mom. Things are different now. What makes you think some stupid boy could trick me into doing something I didn't want to do?

SONNY
We have our ways... even the stupid ones.

JULIE
Why couldn't I just as easily trick him?

SONNY
Because boys want it more than girls!

(CONTINUED)

42 CONTINUED: (3) 42

JULIE
Not the ones I know.

SONNY
(taken aback)
They don't?

JULIE
No.

SONNY
(throws up his hands)
This country is turning into a nation of fags.

JULIE
(laughs)
You act so crazy sometimes. Why are you telling me all this now?

SONNY
Well, that's another thing I have to tell you. Daddy's got to go away for awhile.

JULIE
(sad)
Awww... When?

SONNY
Today. I wish I didn't have to go.

He grabs her and clutches tight, fighting back tears.

43 ON SONNY'S CHEST 43

as Julie's young breasts push into it. He yanks away from her.

SONNY
Goddamn it! If you have to wear that thing why don't you put on a coat.

JULIE
(yanking off hat)
I want to go home.

CUT TO:

43A EXT. JESSICA'S HOUSE - A FEW MINUTES LATER 43A

Sonny pulls up in front of the house with Julie. Things are a little strained between them, they haven't talked much on the way home. They sit there silently a beat, then...

JULIE
Well, I'll see you.

She gives him a peck and starts out of the car. He stops her, grabs and hugs her big.

SONNY
I'm sorry we had a fight.

JULIE
(happy now)
Me, too.

SONNY
Let's not be mad about anything between us... ever. Even things that happen in the future.

JULIE
What do you mean?

SONNY
(hedging)
Julie... there... there are some things in this old life that don't make sense when they first happen. People do things you might not understand until years later.

JULIE
You mean like 2001?

SONNY
What?

JULIE
The movie. When I first saw it, I didn't understand it. But I went back last year and I did. Is that what you mean? Like 2001?

SONNY
Not exactly.

(CONTINUED)

43A CONTINUED: 43A

JULIE
Then I guess I don't know what you're trying to tell me, Daddy.

SONNY
(relieved)
Good. Well, honey... I better go.

He starts to kiss her again but she stops him.

JULIE
Is this a business trip?

SONNY
Uh... yeah.

JULIE
Is Mary Ellen going with you?

SONNY
Not this time.

JULIE
Who's going to take care of you?

SONNY
Guess I'll have to do it.

JULIE
(playing with the hairs on his chest)
I wish I was going with you.

SONNY
(slapping her hand away)
Don't say that!

JULIE
What's the matter? Daddy, where are you going?

SONNY
Bakersfield.

JULIE
But you talk funny... like you're going somewhere... awful.

(CONTINUED)

43A CONTINUED: (2) 43A

SONNY
Have you ever been to Bakersfield?

JULIE
I know you haven't been feeling good. Are you going into the hospital?

SONNY
No, darlin'. You have my word. Daddy's not going into any hospital.

JULIE
(relieved, kissing him)
I'm so glad.

SONNY
I'm going to miss you, Julie. More than anything I'm going to miss you.

JULIE
You'll see me when you get back.

SONNY
Yeah.

Sonny knows he won't. He hugs his daughter again. This time he is unsuccessful in fighting back tears. He turns his back so Julie won't see him.

SONNY
(continuing)
I better go. 'Bye, sweetheart.

He kisses her, but keeps his tear-filled eyes averted. X
Julie hops out of the car. X

JULIE
'Bye, Daddy.

Julie runs into the house. Sonny can't lift his head for a moment. Then he wipes away the tears and looks at Julie entering the house. Sonny starts to drive off. He notices Julie's new hat on the seat and decides he very badly wants to keep it.

DISSOLVE TO:

44 INT. SONNY'S PARENTS' APARTMENT - DAY 44

This is the plastic-not-so-fantastic apartment of BEN and MAUREEN LAWSON, Sonny's parents. The apartment has a gold-flecked mural on the wall that matches the rug that matches the sofa... all three match the gold-flecked ceiling. The furnishings are comfortable and express a deep love of naugahyde by the occupants. Sonny's mother, a woman of about sixty who is still kind of attractive even with a perpetually worried look on her face, is watching a TV quiz show as her husband (ten years older and looks it) sits at the dinette table working on a "paint by the number" picture of Vincent Van Gogh's "The Potato Farmers!" The walls of the apartment are decorated with many of these number paintings.

BEN
I don't like this guy's colors, Maureen. They're all the same. All day I've been painting eleven... eleven... eleven.

MAUREEN
I'm sorry, Ben. The store was out of sad clowns.

The DOORBELL RINGS, Maureen turns down the TV and hurries to answer, worried at who it could be. When she opens it, Sonny is standing there sheepishly. Sonny has always stood in all of his parents' various doorways sheepishly.

SONNY
Hi, Mom... hi, Dad.

They are both glad to see him.

MAUREEN
Sonny!

BEN
You hungry, son?

MAUREEN
(worried)
Oh... I'm almost out of milk.

SONNY
That's okay. I'm not hungry. I just dropped in for a few minutes.

Sonny goes over to his father's number painting.

(CONTINUED)

44 CONTINUED: 44

SONNY
(continuing)
How's the art world?

BEN
Boring... but what else are you going to do when you're seventy? Sit around and watch your hands turn brown?

Maureen pats Sonny's head as she goes back to the TV.

MAUREEN
I hope you can stay a while, Sonny.
(turning up TV volume)
We never talk.

SONNY
Er... actually, I have to get back to work. What I really wanted was to borrow a couple of sleeping pills. I... uh... been working a lot and it's hard to go to sleep when...

MAUREEN
Sleeping pills? We don't have any sleeping pills, do we, Ben?

BEN
You know damn well we got enough sleeping pills in there to put the Mormon Tabernacle Choir in a coma. Take what you need, son. Careful how you use 'em.

SONNY
I will be.

Sonny exits the living room into the bathroom.

MAUREEN
(calls after him)
Don't take too many, Sonny. So many young people are getting addicted to those things.

BEN
(also calling after him)
Try the blue ones. They'll really put you in la-la land.

45 INT. BATHROOM - DAY 45

Sonny has opened his parents' medicine cabinet... it's filled with the same enormous variety of antacids as his own medicine cabinet, plus dozens of prescription pill bottles in a variety of entrancing colors.

SONNY
No wonder my folks can put up with each other.

Sonny is delighted as he dumps out downers from the various bottles, taking some from each so it won't be obvious what a big pile he's taking.

46 INT. LIVING ROOM 46

Sonny comes back into the living room with a pocket bulging with pills. The parents have gone back to their activities... number painting and TV.

SONNY
I really have to go.

MAUREEN
(leaving TV, kissing his cheek)
'Bye, dear.

BEN
Sure you're not hungry? We got great meat loaf.

MAUREEN
(concerned)
Gee, I'd have to heat it up.

BEN
(pissed)
Think you could handle it, Maureen... or would you like me to call in extra help?

MAUREEN
I only meant...

SONNY
That's okay... I'm not hungry ... honest. See ya...

MAUREEN
'Bye...

(CONTINUED)

46 CONTINUED: 46

BEN
'Bye, son.

The folks again go back to their activities as Sonny goes to the door. When he reaches the front door he turns around to look at his parents... they are his parents and this could be the last time he ever sees them. The parents notice he's not leaving.

MAUREEN
Is anything wrong, Sonny?

BEN
(quickly)
Of course not.

SONNY
Well... there is something...

MAUREEN
Something wrong???

BEN
(not wanting to hear anything bad)
No, Maureen. Leave him alone.

Sonny closes the door and comes back into the room hesitantly.

SONNY
(sighs)
I guess it is something I should tell you.

Maureen and Ben look at each other. They're afraid ... Sonny never tells them anything and they like it that way.

SONNY
(continuing)
I... I went to the doctor today and I'm.... sick. Real sick.

BEN
(getting up)
Damn... I need more number eleven... burnt sienna? This guy uses a lot of burnt sienna.
(he exits into bedroom)
Maybe I left it in the bedroom.

(CONTINUED)

46 CONTINUED: (2) 46

Ben quickly goes off into the bedroom. Sonny goes through a couple of quick changes at his father's hasty retreat... surprise, hurt, then wry humor.

SONNY
It's not really that bad, Mom. I may need to get a shot or something.

MAUREEN
(shaking head)
It's more than that. You haven't been looking well to me lately.

SONNY
Mom, I haven't looked well to you since I got out of junior high. It's nothing.

MAUREEN
(knows he's lying)
Sonny, tell me the truth. I'm still your mother. What kind of illness do you have?

SONNY
(he knows she'll persist)
Well... I've been having some pains... mostly in my chest and stomach... and some pretty bad headaches. I'm weak a lot, too.

MAUREEN
(her eyes grow wide in terror)
Oh, Sonny... I know what that is...

SONNY
Now, Mom...

MAUREEN
I have the same thing.

SONNY
Huh?

MAUREEN
I wake up in the morning and just want to stay in bed. Do your pains come mostly on the left side?

46 CONTINUED: (3) 46

She points to her side over here.

SONNY
(giving up)
No... no... they're kind of spread out evenly. I really have to get back to work, Mom.

MAUREEN
You stay with the doctor, Sonny.

SONNY
I will.

MAUREEN
And ask him about my pain on the left side.

SONNY
Okay, Mom... 'bye.
(he gives her a kiss on the cheek)
And say goodbye to Pop.

He exits quickly.

46A EXT. SONNY'S APARTMENT - NIGHT 46AX

ESTABLISHING SHOT of Sonny's car parked in front of "Singles Only" apartment building. X X

47 INT. SONNY'S APARTMENT - NIGHT 47 X

Sonny is sitting in his apartment, staring down at the coffee table and the neat pyramid he's made of all the pills. He keeps arranging and rearranging them as he works on convincing himself. Next to the pills is a container of unopened milk. He snatches up the pile of pills and brings them slowly up to his mouth. His hand is shaking badly and his jaw begins to chatter as though he has a chill. He slams his hand down and opens his fist, dumping out the pills. He begins stacking and restacking them again.

SONNY
I'm running out on my kid.
(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

47 CONTINUED: 47

SONNY (CONT'D)
(then)
Ah, she's probably better off without me.
(picks up pills)
I'm also running out on my business.
(puts the pills down)
I know they're better off without me.
(picks them up)
Is this the coward's way out?
(realizes)
Of course. That's why I picked it.

So saying, Sonny shoves all the pills in his mouth. With cheeks bulging, he grabs the carton of milk and takes a huge gulp. The instant the milk hits his mouth, Sonny reacts.

SONNY
(continuing; with mouth full)
Spoiled!! Yecch...

He makes a terrible face and spits out the whole mess. Pills and milk go spritzing across the room as Sonny gags in disgust. He looks at the mess on the floor and shudders.

48 ANOTHER ANGLE 48

Sonny trudges around the room, flops down on the sofa exhausted and shaken. He remembers something and gets up, crosses to an end table where a lot of magazines and books are scattered around. He finds a local newspaper and turns to a back page where there's an ad that reads: "LONELY? DEPRESSED? CONTEMPLATING SUICIDE? DONT'T DO IT!! DIAL 5-5-5-H-E-L-P HOT LINE FOR HELP." Sonny takes the ad and goes over to the phone. He dials 5-5-5-H-E-L-P and waits. After a moment, we HEAR a RECORDING from the other end.

VOICE (V.O.)
(from phone)
All our lines are busy. Please hold as your call will be automatically connected to the first available counselor. This will not be repeated. Thank you for waiting. X

Sad melancholy MUSAK is HEARD in background. X

(CONTINUED)

48 CONTINUED: 48

Sonny slams down the phone.

SONNY
I'm doing it.

(CONTINUED)

48 CONTINUED: 48

Sonny hurries around the room, making a face as he picks up the sticky pills. He goes to the bar, fills a glass with water, then begins trying to wash spoiled milk off the sleeping pills and dry them. It's not a job for an anxious, impatient suicidee. The pills begin to mush and stick together. He grows tired of this and balls them all up in the towel, rubbing them into one clean, gooey mass of death. He pops the wad in his mouth and quickly takes a drink. After he swallows the whole thing down, he stands still for a second... sort of waiting to see if there's any immediate effect. He decides he can't feel one.

49 OMITTED 49

50 ANOTHER ANGLE 50

Sonny walks back from the bar and lies down on the sofa to get himself calm and ready to die. He stares at the ceiling, thinking.

SONNY
I never had my own dog.
(suddenly)
The note!

He gets up and goes over to the desk and starts rummaging through some colored pens. The pills are taking their effect, he's wobbly. His desk is messy with colored pentels, real estate brochures, magazines. He rummages through the colored pens.

SONNY
(continuing)
Black... stay traditional. Nobody wants a cute suicide note.

He sits down at the desk with the pen and stares down at an empty tablet.

SONNY
(continuing)
Who should I address it to? Jessie? No, Mary Ellen would be hurt. I'll write it to Mary Ellen.
(then)
No, Jessie would be hurt.
(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

50 CONTINUED: 50

SONNY (CONT'D)
No matter who I address it to, my mother will be hurt.
(thinks)
I could write it to my father, but he might not read it.
(thinks)
Who do I know mature enough to handle a suicide note?
(thinks and begins writing)
'Dear Julie... Please forgive me for...'

51 ANGLE ON NOTE 51

Sonny is losing motor control and his writing is almost illegible.

SONNY
Shit.

52 BACK TO SCENE 52

There is a KNOCK at the DOOR. Sonny crosses to the door, so woozy now he almost doesn't make it, opening the closet door first. The KNOCKING CONTINUES. Sonny goes to the front door. A little scared, he calls through the door...

SONNY
Saint Peter?

COP'S VOICE
(from other side)
Don't be a wise ass. I got a citation here.

Sonny opens the door and sees the two Cops from the funeral procession standing there with pad and citation, being formal... X X

COP
(continuing)
Sonny Lawson?

SONNY
Not anymore.

Sonny collapses in a heap at the feet of the two confused Cops. X X

CUT TO:

53 EXT. LA PLAYA - EARLY MORNING 53

A small, private mental hospital. The buildings are stylish and comfortable. The grounds idyllic, except for a wire fence that surrounds the place and a small guard station at the wrought-iron gate entrance. A sign inside the fence reads, "LA PLAYA PSYCHIATRIC CENTER." Underneath that, somebody has scrawled: "NAPOLEON SLEPT HERE." Over this tranquil picture, we HEAR the sweet SOUND of many different BIRDS breaking the dawn. A "fisherman" is seated on a bridge holding a bamboo pole with no line or tackle. X X

54 ANGLE ON A BARRED WINDOW 54

An absolute lunatic is sitting at the window, staring happily out at the morning and making all the bird whistles we have just heard with his own two lips.

CUT TO:

55 INT. HOSPITAL ROOM - DAY 55

Sonny is lying in a hospital bed and appears to be sleeping peacefully. Sitting on the opposite side of his bed is MARLON BORUNKI, a fat, bookish-looking guy. Marlon is wearing a jacket and tie and is making some notes in a large notebook when Sonny suddenly sits bolt upright.

SONNY
(shouts)
Shit! Goddammit! Sonofabitch! Goddammit!!

Marlon eagerly continues writing in the notebook. Sonny sees him and reacts, rubbing his eyes, trying to come out of his groggy confusion.

MARLON
It's interesting how you woke up cursing. A large percentage of attempted suicides come out of their comas with exclamations of hostility.

SONNY
Where am I?

MARLON
(chuckles knowingly and writes in book)
Ninety-two percent of them ask that. You're in La Playa.

(CONTINUED)

55 CONTINUED: 55

SONNY
The nut house?

MARLON
That's a cruel label. We prefer 'booby hatch.'

SONNY
Are you a doctor?

MARLON
Oh, no... I'm a patient.

Marlon stands up to shake hands and we see, below his jacket and tie, hangs a hospital gown. His feet are in slippers. Marlon takes Sonny's hesitant hand and shakes it.

MARLON
(continuing; introducing himself)
Marlon Borunki, paranoid schizophrenic, deep feelings of inferiority, alternating with delusions of grandeur.

SONNY
Sonny Lawson, real estate.

MARLON
(leaning in close)
Say, didn't you used to be on television selling land somewhere?
(remembers)
Lake Crest Estates!

SONNY
(getting scared of this guy)
I swear there was a lake there. I don't know where the hell it went. You didn't buy a lot there, did you?

MARLON
Oh, no. I don't buy land on TV. I'm crazy, but I'm not that crazy.
(admiring Sonny)
Gee, a real TV star.

(CONTINUED)

55 CONTINUED: (2) 55

SONNY
How'd I get in here?

MARLON
They transferred you last night from Cottage Hospital. You tried to kill yourself... unsuccessfully. Needless to add.
(to self)
Then why did you add it, dummy?

He bites himself on the shoulder as punishment, then kisses it, then turns to Sonny as though nothing happened, and proudly holds up his manuscript.

MARLON
(continuing)
I'm writing a book on insanity. I call it, 'A View from the Other Side.'
(glowing as he looks through his own notebook)
I've got two whole chapters on suicide. Did you know that almost fifty percent of all female suicides have bleached hair and a hysterectomy scar?

Marlon looks to Sonny for approval but all Sonny really wants to do is die... He stares blankly at the ceiling, searching for a way to do it. Marlon is sympathetic.

MARLON
(continuing)
Are you depressed?

SONNY
Yeah. I thought I'd wake up dead. They had no right to barge in and stop me.

MARLON
Technically, they did have a right. It's against the law to kill yourself.

SONNY
You're kidding.

(CONTINUED)

55 CONTINUED: (3) 55

MARLON
No. The laws vary from state to state, but suicide is legislated against in most of them. It's all in the appendix of my book.

SONNY
That's the dumbest thing I ever heard of.

MARLON
I agree with you. It's always struck me that it is just as presumptuous to tell a person how to die as it is to tell them how to live.

SONNY
(shakes head)
What a dumb law.

MARLON
Sane people make a lot of crazy rules.
(then, out of the blue)
Do you like me?

SONNY
Sure, Marlon. I don't know you very well, but...

MARLON
Oh, you know all there is to know. I'm very superficial.
(his other half speaks)
You said it.
(arguing back)
I know I said it.

SONNY
Uh... do you share this room with me?

MARLON
Oh, no. I'm in the South Wing. That's where the real dangerous ones.

(CONTINUED)

55 CONTINUED: (4) 55

SONNY
Are you dangerous?

MARLON
Well, my father thought I was.

SONNY
And he put you in here?

MARLON
No, I strangled him. I guess he was right. Every doctor has a different theory why I did it, father complex, feelings of rejection, suppressed rage. But I know the real reason, it was because he was so Polish!

SONNY
Polish?

MARLON
(nods)
Ever since I was a little child I've been taunted by Polish jokes. ... You know, 'How can you tell a Polack's identification? By the shit in his wallet.' 'Who was Poland's man of the year... Nobody... ' 'How do you sing the Polish National Anthem? You don't sing it, you fart it.

SONNY
Kids are cruel.

MARLON
What kids? These were told to me by my father. He teased me all the time. The big, loud, hairy, sweaty Polack! He was always covered with sweat. He's the only person I know who sweated while he was swimming. And stupid! He thought Moby Dick was a venereal disease. I could never have friends over. He'd challenge them to nose-picking contests.
(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

55 CONTINUED: (5) 55

MARLON (CONT'D)
(he is starting to tremble and shake)
The last straw was the night I finally brought a girl home. I knew I shouldn't have done it. There he was, sitting in his favorite sweaty undershirt, drinking beer and watching Celebrity Bowling ... eating chili with his fingers. At first he was nice. Then, just as the young lady and I were leaving for dinner, he told her that she shouldn't waste an evening with a loser like me.
(beginning to tremble)
I put my hands around his 22-inch neck and strangled him!
(other voice)
You say it like you're proud!
(defending)
Well, you didn't have the guts to do it.

SONNY
(a little nervous about this guy)
Oh God, I'm sick.

MARLON
Oh, after I was born, my mother left me and my father. I always respected her for that.
(then, out of the blue)
You think this country will ever have the sense to switch over to the metric system?

Sonny stares at Marlon a long time... this is the most depressing story he's ever heard, but he can't think of anything to comfort Marlon. He is too depressed and confused himself.

SONNY
(falling back on pillow)
I wish I was dead... And I have to go to the bathroom.

(CONTINUED)

55 CONTINUED: (6) 55

MARLON
(nods)
One hundred percent of all new arrivals have to go to the bathroom.

Sonny starts to get out of bed and realizes he is very woozy as he struggles to pull himself into a sitting position. Marlon grabs the stainless steel pan under the bed and offers it to Sonny.

MARLON
(continuing)
You shouldn't get up yet.

SONNY
I can't pee into that.

Sonny has gotten himself into a wavering sitting position and is tentatively tapping the cold floor with his bare feet. He finally stands up and begins shakily making his way towards the bathroom. Marlon wants to help but doesn't know exactly how... And Sonny doesn't want help anyway.

MARLON
I'll get a nurse.

SONNY
I can't pee with a nurse around.

Sonny gets into the bathroom, leans against the wall next to the toilet and prepares to pee, first giving an apologetic look to Marlon.

SONNY
(continuing)
I can't pee with the door open.

Sonny gently closes the door. We HOLD on Marlon... There's a pause, then the SOUND of someone URINATING into the john.

MARLON
(shouting into bathroom)
You've got a lot of rules about peeing.

SONNY (O.S.)
(from behind door)
Yeah?

(CONTINUED)

55 CONTINUED: (7) 55

MARLON
That's all right.

SONNY (O.S.)
(from door, sincere)
Thank you.

We CONTINUE HOLDING on Marlon as he hears the FLUSH of the TOILET... then a long, long pause when he hears nothing. The longer the silence the more concerned Marlon becomes. He goes timidly over and calls through the door.

MARLON
Mister Lawson?

Marlon swings the door open to see Sonny standing on the toilet seat with his pajama top off, awkwardly trying to tie it to the light fixture on the ceiling. He's experimenting with different lengths and trying to figure out a way to hang himself with the sleeves.

SONNY
(testing knot)
I don't think it'll work. Do you?

MARLON
Uh, uh.

SONNY
(prowling around room)
Damn, isn't there anything around here a guy can kill himself with?

MARLON
They're pretty thorough... no razors, no glasses, no mirrors.

SONNY
(panicked)
No mirrors?

He looks around for something to see his reflection in; the window, chrome on bed, etc.

SONNY
(continuing)
They can't do this to me!

(CONTINUED)

55 CONTINUED: (8) 55

Sonny puffs out his cheeks and begins to hold his breath.

MARLON
You're holding your breath, hoping to suffocate?

Sonny nods yes with puffed cheeks.

MARLON
(continuing)
It won't work. Once you pass out, you start breathing again. You'll just get a headache.

Sonny blows out the air in disgust. Marlon begins fiddling with the up-and-down button on the electric bed.

MARLON
(continuing)
I wonder if you could stick your head in there and crack it. Sort of like a walnut. Ahh, it's a crazy idea.

Sonny picks up a white enameled urinal. He examines it curiously, then places it gently between the iron rods of the electric bed. He then pushes the control button and the bed slowly and methodically lowers on the urinal. It crushes it slowly, the enamel coating cracks and flies off the mangled urinal. Sonny and Marlon look at each other and smile.

SONNY
It is a crazy idea. But sometimes those are the best kind.

Suddenly, the door bursts open and two husky male nurses come bursting in. One of them is black (CARL), the other is white, very muscular, but short (BOOKER). Carl holds up a straitjacket for Marlon.

CARL
Tsk, tsk, Marlon. You've been making up your own visiting hours again.

BOOKER
You're to come with me, Mister Lawson.

Sonny backs away. At the same time, Carl is taunting Marlon, holding out the straitjacket.

MARLON
Get away from me with that thing.

(CONTINUED)

55 CONTINUED: (9) 55

CARL
Just think of it as a Polish dinner jacket.

Carl and Booker laugh.

SONNY
(angry)
How can you make fun about a problem that's not his fault and he's obviously sensitive about.

Carl and Booker exchange looks, they are a little ashamed.

BOOKER
We're sorry.

Booker gently takes Sonny by the arm.

SONNY
Get your hands off me, you little dwarf!

Booker drags Sonny out of the room as Carl continues struggling with Marlon.

MARLON
I usually escape every Wednesday and Friday. See you then, Mr. Lawson. X

SONNY
Sonny.

MARLON
(proud)
Okay, Sonny.
(to Carl)
That's my friend, Sonny.

Sonny is led off.

CUT TO:

56 INT. DR. KLING'S OFFICE 56

Booker leads Sonny into the office of DR. KLING, a very nervous head of psychiatry at La Playa. Kling comes from behind his desk to greet Sonny, giving the nurse a silent nod to release him.

(CONTINUED)

56 CONTINUED: 56

Once Sonny is released, he yanks his arm away toughly like he got away himself. Booker quickly exits the office. Kling offers his hand to Sonny. Sonny doesn't take it. Kling is philosophical about this rejection.

DR. KLING
Mr. Lawson. I'm Dr. Kling. How are you feeling?

SONNY
Cheated. How the hell did I get here?

DR. KLING
You were rushed to Cottage Hospital last night where they pumped your stomach. At that point...
(checks Sonny's file)
Jessica Lawson was notified...

SONNY
Oh, shit...

DR. KLING
She and a Mr. Martin Lieberman made the decision to have you transferred here during the night. Do you remember any of this?

SONNY
Don't start asking me questions. Just tell me how I get out of here.

DR. KLING
Well, a lot depends on you.

SONNY
What does that mean?

DR. KLING
It means your release depends a great deal on your mental state.

SONNY
Here is my mental state... I <u>want</u> <u>out</u>.

(CONTINUED)

56 CONTINUED: (2) 56

DR. KLING
Mr. Lawson, I think you know what I'm trying to say. We can't let you out of here until we're sure you're not going to destroy yourself.

Sonny pounds his fist on the Doctor's desk.

SONNY
It's none of your Goddamn business if I want to destroy myself!

DR. KLING
Perhaps I could help you find out why you want to do it.

SONNY
I know why! It's very simple. I've got a job that makes me vomit, an ex-wife and kid that keep me dripping with guilt. I'm in love with a twelve-year-old who won't come, and I've got an incurable disease that is going to cause me to shit all over myself while I die a painful death.

DR. KLING
That sounds a lot like self-pity to me.

SONNY
It is self-pity, asshole! Now, let me outta here so I can do something about it!

Sonny is suddenly hit with a sharp pain that doubles him over.

SONNY
(continuing; wide-eyed)
Jesus, my first ten.

He collapses again.

DISSOLVE TO:

57 INT. LA PLAYA CORRIDOR - TWO HOURS LATER 57

Dr. Kling is leading Marty and Jessie. Jessie is in tears and Marty is trying to comfort her.

JESSICA
I just know he'll try it again. Sonny likes to get his way.

DR. KLING
Set your mind at ease, Mrs. Lawson. These rooms were designed to house attempted suicides. The windows are barred, no sharp objects or cords in the rooms, constant surveillance. There's no way he can hurt himself in here.

They arrive at Sonny's door; a nurse unlocks and opens it. They are aghast.

58 THEIR POV - SONNY'S HOSPITAL ROOM 58

Sonny has taken Marlon's advice. He is down on his knees, his head placed on the lower part of the bed frame and is in the process of crushing his skull by using the automatic control device to bring the heavy metal upper frame down on his own skull. (Maybe a little of "The Nutcracker Suite" OVER this.)

SONNY
Owwwww!

Marty rushes forward and wrests the control device from Sonny's hand. He hastily presses a button, squeezing Sonny's head even tighter.

SONNY
(continuing)
Owwwww!

Marty quickly pushes the other button, releasing Sonny's head. Sonny falls backwards, reeling with pain and clutching his scrunched head. Kling meanwhile has picked up the automatic bed device. He studies it long and hard.

CUT TO:

59 INT. SAME CORRIDOR - FIFTEEN MINUTES LATER 59

The corridor is a mess of confusion, filled with crazies, nurses and hospital orderlies who are moving mechanical beds out of the rooms and regular beds (without controls) into the rooms. Dr. Kling is overseeing the operation while the hall nurses are busy trying to keep the patients from killing themselves. Sonny, Jessica and Marty are huddled in chairs at one end of the corridor, having been temporarily displaced also. Sonny is holding his head and moaning in pain.

JESSICA
Want me to ask the nurse for some more aspirin?

SONNY
Ask her for a .32 automatic.

MARTY
Sonny, the more you talk like that, the longer you're going to be in here.

SONNY
I'm not going to be in here at all, Marty. I want out! You're a lawyer. Bribe somebody!

MARTY
We don't have to bribe anybody. All we have to do is sign a release and pay the bill.

SONNY
Then why the hell aren't you doing that right now?!

MARTY
Because neither one of us is sure you're not going to just get out of here and go try it again.

SONNY
Quit worrying. No more suicide attempts...

They're relieved.

SONNY
(continuing)
The next time I'm succeeding.

(CONTINUED)

59 CONTINUED: 59

JESSICA
Sonny, why do you keep taunting us with your suicide? It's like you're bragging about it.

SONNY
I'm not bragging. It's just what I'm going to do.

JESSICA
Well, damn it, neither one of us is going to sign a release until you promise not to!

SONNY
Okay, I promise.

MARTY
Bullshit.

SONNY
I swear on my life.

There is dead silence.

JESSICA
Right now, you're suffering from depression as much as your illness. Once the depression is over...

SONNY
The depression isn't going to be over. I'm gonna shrivel up and turn yellow. You think looking like an old Jap is going to cheer me up?!

JESSICA
Sonny, calm down... please.

SONNY
(pacing)
How can I calm down? It's like I'm trapped in some kind of nightmare. You people won't be happy until you see me alive.

JESSICA
We're doing this because we love you.

(CONTINUED)

59 CONTINUED: (2) 59

SONNY
Anybody who really loved me wouldn't want me to suffer.
(pleads)
Please. I only have a couple of days left anyway.

MARTY
That's bullshit, too. We checked with the doctor. You're not going to die right away. Why do you always have to rush everything.

SONNY
Because pretty soon I'm going to be too weak to make my own decisions. So weak the courts will let assholes like you make them for me.

MARTY
I don't deserve that.

SONNY
I'm sorry. I don't deserve to die. I want to talk to Jessica alone.

JESSICA
(worried at the prospect)
No, I...

SONNY
Please, honey.

He takes her hands, a plea. Jessica nods "okay."

MARTY
I'll wait outside.
(embracing Sonny)
I love you, Sonny. I'll do anything you want. I'll be your slave... get you girls...
(to Jessica)
I'm sorry, Jessie.
(to Sonny)
I... I just can't do this.

SONNY
I love you, too. Now get out of here.

(CONTINUED)

59 CONTINUED: (3) 59

Marty quickly exits. Jessica and Sonny are left alone.

SONNY
(continuing)
What did you tell Julie?

JESSICA
Nothing.

SONNY
Good.
(taking her hands and staring deep into her eyes)
Jessica, you have to sign me out of here.

JESSICA
I... I don't want you in a place like this. But... I don't want you dead either.

SONNY
Jessica, you and I are two people who once loved each other, right?

JESSICA
Right.

SONNY
Maybe we still love each other.

JESSICA
I don't think so.

SONNY
I don't think so either. But we could fake it a little at a time like this.

JESSICA
(shakes head)
Ever since those two hookers...

SONNY
Will you forget the hookers?! Isn't it ever time for you to forgive and forget? I've been as loyal as I could.
(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

59 CONTINUED: (4) 59

SONNY (CONT'D)
(dramatically)
I suppose now is the time to tell you I'm leaving you and Julie everything.

JESSICA
Everything but the three thousand dollars you're leaving that little shit, Mary Ellen.

SONNY
(total reverse)
Now is no time to discuss money. Just get me out of here.

JESSICA
(shaking her head)
Sonny, I understand what you're going through but...

SONNY
No you don't. Until you've been pronounced dead, you have no idea what I'm going through.

JESSICA
All right. I'm trying to understand.

SONNY
You're doing a lousy job of it.

JESSICA
I can't let you kill yourself. It's a burden I'd carry the rest of my life. Letting you take your life would make my own life meaningless. Tell me you understand.

SONNY
I understand what I've always understood. You're a selfish bitch.

Jessic starts to run out. Sonny grabs her hand.

SONNY
(continuing)
Wait! You're not a selfish bitch. You're just a wife.

(CONTINUED)

59 CONTINUED: (5) 59

JESSICA
Sexist ass right to the last.

SONNY
Oh, Jessica, I was trying to be nice.

JESSICA
Forget it. We've forgotten how to be nice to each other.

SONNY
Please sign me out of here.

JESSICA
Sonny, I can't take any more of this! Okay, maybe I don't know how you feel. But can you imagine how I feel? If I tried to kill myself would you let me do it?

SONNY
If I knew you were dying?

JESSICA
Yes.

SONNY
Of course.

JESSICA
You really would?

SONNY
If you knew you were going to suffer.

JESSICA
Sonny.

SONNY
(thinks, then)
No, I couldn't.

JESSICA
Oh, Sonny... let's stop hurting each other. Please. Let's stop ... right now... forever...

They sit. She hugs and rocks him. They both begin to cry.

DISSOLVE TO:

60 EXT. LA PLAYA - NEXT DAY 60

Sonny, in hospital garb, is being escorted around the grounds by Booker. Sonny berates Booker but Booker calmly ignores him, smoking a cigarette and leading Sonny firmly by the arm.

SONNY
Quit dragging me around, Booker. This is supposed to be exercise for me. Not your arm... Is that the reason you went into nursing? To drag people around?

Sonny stops walking. Booker drags him along.

SONNY
(continuing)
Because if it is, you're very good at it.

Booker shoves Sonny down on a bench.

SONNY
(continuing)
You know why you're aggressive, Booker? 'Cause you're short. You're sort of an ugly Tom Thumb.

An UNCTUOUS MAN in a suit and carrying a briefcase rushes up to Sonny.

UNCTUOUS MAN
Oh, Mister Lawson, I'm so glad you're not dead. You mustn't think of killing yourself. We'll find a way to keep you alive... together.

SONNY
(sort of recognizing him)
Don't I know you?

UNCTUOUS MAN
Ross Walters, your insurance man.

He gives Sonny his card and sits next to him.

UNCTUOUS MAN
(continuing)
Perhaps we could discuss a settlement now. You know, money to live it up before...

(CONTINUED)

60 CONTINUED: 60

SONNY
Booker, this man is annoying me and increasing my desire to kill myself. How did he get in here? He's driving me crazy.

BOOKER
(taking Unctuous Man)
You'll have to go now.

UNCTUOUS MAN
But...

Booker leads the Unctuous Man off.

SONNY
See if they got policies for midgets, Booker.

They go off and Sonny is left alone. After a beat, an ELDERLY PATIENT comes up and sits down next to Sonny. Sonny barely acknowledges him at first and vice versa. They sit there silently a beat. Then...

SONNY
(continuing)
This place is nothing but a fancy prison.

OLD MAN
Absolutely.

SONNY
I'd sure as hell like to get out of here. Wouldn't you?

OLD MAN
Oh, absolutely.

SONNY
I have a toxic blood disease. No chance of survival. Zip... you know what I mean?

OLD MAN
Absolutely.

SONNY
Wouldn't you want to kill yourself under those circumstances?

(CONTINUED)

60 CONTINUED: (2) 60

OLD MAN
Absolutely.

Sonny snorts in triumph and sits brooding on the bench. After another stretch of silence:

OLD MAN
(continuing)
Absolutely.

Sonny looks over at the Old Man.

OLD MAN
(continuing)
Absolutely.

SONNY
Oh, shit. You're as crazy as everybody else around here.

OLD MAN
Absolutely.

Suddenly, Sonny hears something from the bushes behind him.

MARLON (O.S.)
Yoo, hoo.

Sonny turns and sees Marlon sticking his head out of some bushes.

SONNY
Marlon!

He is glad to see Marlon and crosses to the bushes.

SONNY
(continuing)
How'd you escape?

MARLON
I forgot. I forget a lot of things as soon as I do them.

SONNY
You're lucky.

MARLON
How are you doing, Sonny?

SONNY
Not so good.

(CONTINUED)

60 CONTINUED: (3) 60

MARLON
Yeah. I heard about the bed. You should never use my dumb ideas. Out of the mouths of Polacks...

SONNY
Stop that, Marlon. It would've worked if they hadn't caught me. It did hurt a lot, though. I wish I could think of some way to do it that didn't hurt.

MARLON
(something that's been on his mind)
Uhhh... I've always thought that jumping out of a window would be kind of painless... except for the last part.

SONNY
(likes the idea)
At least it'd be quick. I couldn't change my mind. I'd do it right now... but all the windows have bars.

MARLON
Not in the tower.

SONNY
How do I get in the tower?

MARLON
Follow me.
(opening crack in bushes)
You first.

Sonny goes through the bushes, slightly trepidatious.

DISSOLVE TO:

61 OMITTED 61

62 SERIES OF SHOTS - SONNY AND MARLON 62

as they sneak across the grounds, into the administration building and up to the third floor. X

63 INT. THIRD FLOOR CORRIDOR - SONNY AND MARLON 63 X

They come creeping around a corner and approach an open window at one end of the corridor. Sonny whispers "shhhh" and climbs up on the windowsill.

64 SONNY'S POV 64

as he looks down and around him. A straight wall leading to hard ground.

65 ON SONNY 65

getting chicken.

SONNY
I wish there was a ledge to jump off. In the movies, there's always a ledge.

MARLON
That would just give you another place to stand and talk yourself out of it. Go on, Sonny... jump.

SONNY
(bugged)
Boy, you sure are anxious.

MARLON
I'm sorry. It just seems like it's what you really want. You keep saying you want somebody to believe you.

SONNY
You're right, Marlon. I'm jumping.
(he looks down)
It might not be high enough to kill me, though.

MARLON
(hinting)
There's only one way to find out.

Sonny nods in agreement, screws up his courage and starts to jump again... but at the last moment he decides to turn around and back out, holding onto the windowsill.

MARLON
(continuing)
Well, you're not even going to hurt yourself if you crawl down.

66 EXT. BUILDING - ON SONNY 66

hanging from the windowsill. Marlon at the window urging him on.

MARLON
Come on, Sonny. Give up! You can do it.

SONNY
What if I just land on my feet and break my ankles? Then I'd have a blood disease and broken ankles.

MARLON
(getting impatient)
You want me to drop you on your head? C'mon, I'll drop you on your head. C'mon, c'mon...

SONNY
Wait a minute, Marlon. You could be charged with murder.

MARLON
I've already been convicted of murder.

SONNY
(it makes sense)
Okay. You're sure you want to get involved.

MARLON
Did you mean it when you said you liked me?

SONNY
Yes.

MARLON
Then I want to help.

Marlon begins helping Sonny back in through the window.

67 INT. CORRIDOR 67

Sonny scrambles back inside. Marlon turns him around and begins lowering him back through the window by his ankles.

(CONTINUED)

67 CONTINUED: 67

SONNY
Easy. Easy...

MARLON
Point your head straight down.

68 SONNY'S POV 68

The ground spinning beneath him.

69 EXT. TOWER - ON SONNY AND MARLON AT WINDOW 69

SONNY
Wait! It's not high enough!

MARLON
Sure it is.

SONNY
Don't do it! Please! Lift me back up.

Marlon sighs and hauls Sonny back inside.

70 INT. CORRIDOR 70

Marlon, puffing, drags Sonny back in.

SONNY
What'd you pull me in for?

MARLON
You asked me to.

SONNY
Marlon, don't listen to me. I need you because I haven't got the guts to do this thing myself.

MARLON
I'm sorry. I failed you.
(other side)
Typical.
(then)
Shut up!

SONNY
(looking at window)
You know, Marlon, you can still help me.

(CONTINUED)

70 CONTINUED: 70

MARLON
Oh, how???

SONNY
Push me out. I'll stand in front and you just push me out. No thinking.

MARLON
With pleasure.

Sonny stands squarely in front of the window, eyes closed, Marlon tries to push him out but Sonny resists, holding onto window frame.

SONNY
Maybe it's not high enough.

MARLON
Quit resisting!
(other self)
You're going to fail again, Polack.
(then)
Oh, yeah. I'll show me!

Marlon runs back a few yards, then comes charging towards Sonny. Sonny steps out of the way at the last minute. Marlon goes flying out the window.

MARLON
(continuing)
Ahhhhhhh!

71 SONNY'S POV 71

Looking down at Marlon lying in a crumpled heap. Marlon looks up.

MARLON
You're right. It's not high enough.

DISSOLVE TO:

72 INT. HOSPITAL CORRIDOR - LATER THAT DAY 72

Sonny is being led down a corridor by Booker.

(CONTINUED)

72 CONTINUED: 72

SONNY
You're not just short, Booker. You're also squat. Some men can carry off being short. But nobody likes a squat person.

They arrive at a door with a sign, "DR. JAMES N. MANEET, X DEATH THERAPY."

SONNY
(continuing)
Here's a guy who's carved out a fun career for himself.

Booker pushes Sonny inside.

73 INT. DR. MANEET'S OFFICE 73

Seated behind a desk is DR. MANEET, a robust and cheerful man in his mid-fifties. The walls of his office are filled with pictures, framed letters, awards, etc. The fellow who occupies this space is obviously well liked. In one corner of the room there is a casual pile of physical fitness equipment.

DR. MANEET
Hello.

BOOKER
This is Mr. Lawson. I'll be outside.

SONNY
You'll always be outside, Booker... And you'll be too short to look in.

Dr. Maneet suppresses a laugh. Booker exits.

DR. MANEET
Have a seat, Mr. Lawson. I'm Dr. Maneet.

Dr. Maneet offers his hand. Sonny shakes it unenthusiastically.

SONNY
And you're going to try to talk me into living.

(CONTINUED)

73 CONTINUED: 73

DR. MANEET
No, I'm not. As I understand it, you're definitely going to die.

SONNY
(shocked)
Well... that's a weird thing to say.

DR. MANEET
It is? Why?

SONNY
Well... I mean, it's the truth. Nobody's come out and said it. I mean, nobody except me.

DR. MANEET
People tend to coddle or cover up things when someone they love is ill. It makes it easier for them.

SONNY
Screw them.

DR. MANEET
I agree with you. One of the worst aspects of dying is that it's so lonely. People are unable or afraid to share your grief.

SONNY
Lonely... that's right. You can't imagine how lonely.

DR. MANEET
I don't have to imagine it. I'm dying too.

The Doctor gives out this bit of information casually, but it hits Sonny like a body blow.

SONNY
<u>You're</u>... dying?

DR. MANEET
Yep. The doctors tell me I could go anytime... just like that.
(snaps fingers)
Of course, they told me that over two years ago.

(CONTINUED)

73 CONTINUED: (2) 73

It's still hard for Sonny to believe or even absorb all this. Standing before him is a man sharing the same awesome experience. His attitude towards the Doctor immediately changes. He is no longer hostile, only confused.

SONNY
But you seem... so alive.

DR. MANEET
Yes, it's strange. I'm not always this robust, but right now I seem to be in a period of total remission. I even played tennis yesterday.

SONNY
Did you win?

DR. MANEET
No. I played shitty. But, I also played shitty when I was well.

SONNY
What have you got?

DR. MANEET
Heart trouble. Lots of heart trouble.

SONNY
I don't see how you can keep working.

DR. MANEET
I couldn't at first. I dropped my private practice. But then I just kept on living... and it got pretty boring. Then I got into this death therapy. I don't know if it's helping anybody else, but it sure is helping me. I think my work is what's keeping me alive.

SONNY
You're lucky. I sell real estate. Selling real estate never kept anybody alive. In fact, it killed a few friends of mine.
(realizes)
Hey, you're the first doctor I haven't hated since I got sick.

(CONTINUED)

73 CONTINUED: (3) 73

DR. MANEET
That's because we're both in the same boat. Some people in my therapy group are really close to kicking the bucket. You'll love them.

SONNY
Wait a minute. I didn't say I was coming to any group. I want to commit suicide.

DR. MANEET
Well, you're sure having a hard time doing it.

SONNY
(flushing)
That's because nobody'll leave me alone.

DR. MANEET
Either that or you don't really want to do it.

SONNY
I want to do it. I'm in love with the idea of dying. I get a hard-on every time I think about it!

DR. MANEET
I'm sure a part of you thinks of it as a romantic notion, but another part feels guilty about taking your own life.

SONNY
That's head shrinker bullshit. I'm not guilty about it.

Maneet takes a letter off his desk.

DR. MANEET
Then why did your suicide letter to your daughter begin with an apology...
(reads)
'Dear Julie, please forgive... '

(CONTINUED)

73 CONTINUED: (4) 73

SONNY
Give me that!!
(he grabs the note and looks at it)
You play dirty, Doctor.

DR. MANEET
The stakes are high... life and death.

Sonny looks at the note again, tears it up and begins pacing around the room. He suddenly kicks over a chair and stalks over to face the wall. He stands with his back to Dr. Maneet for a moment. His shoulders slump.

SONNY
I'm sorry.
(turning back to face the doctor)
I just want to be put out of my misery. Jesus, they do that for a horse.
(then)
See, Doctor, I'm terrified of pain. Haircuts hurt me.

DR. MANEET
Sonny. what makes you so convinced your death is going to be painful? Have you ever actually seen someone die?

SONNY
I had an aunt that died, but I never really saw her much after she went in the hospital.

DR. MANEET
That's one of the reasons people in our culture are so frightened of dying. We never see what it's actually like. We hide it behind walls.

SONNY
I remember being kind of glad when they took my aunt away. I was tired of finding wadded up kleenexes everywhere.

(CONTINUED)

73 CONTINUED: (5) 73

DR. MANEET
Death can be a strain on the family, but it also strengthens it. People should die at home.

SONNY
If I wanted to die at home, I'd have to hustle between my ex-wife and kids' house, my girlfriend's house and my place. I'd probably die in a taxi.

DR. MANEET
Are your parents alive, Sonny?

SONNY
No... I mean, yes.
(realizes)
I guess that's what they call a Freudian slip.

DR. MANEET
Either that or a boo boo.

Sonny laughs. This may be the first time we've heard him really laugh. The doctor shares the laugh with him.

DR. MANEET
(continuing)
Why don't you at least come to one death therapy session? Just sitting around talking to people like yourself can make death less scarey. Maybe even meaningful...

Sonny shakes his head "no." Doctor Maneet shrugs "have it your way," as he gets up from behind his desk.

DR. MANEET
(continuing)
Okay. I'll let you out of here, but I want you to at least read a pamphlet. Okay?

SONNY
Sure.

Dr. Maneet crosses over to a bookcase bulging with books and files. As he crosses and searches the bookcase, he begins whistling a nondescript tune. This simple act astonishes Sonny. X

73 CONTINUED: (6) 73

Dr. Maneet spots the pamphlets on a top shelf, a little too high for him to reach. He leaps up but doesn't make it. He leaps again and manages to grab a couple of pamphlets, but they're the wrong ones.

SONNY
(continuing)
Hey, never mind. Maybe I'll just come to one of your sessions.

DR. MANEET
(puffing and out of breath)
Really?

SONNY
What the hell. I can't imagine spending another happy minute, but you're dying, too, and you're the happiest sonofabitch I ever saw. You were just whistling. Dying and actually whistling. I'll give it a shot.

DR. MANEET
It's a good decision, Sonny.

SONNY
You're a hell of a salesman. I'm going to need your help to hang in.

DR. MANEET
I'm not going anywhere.

Sonny smiles and they shake hands. The doctor lets out a small gasp, his eyes roll to the top of his head, and he slumps to the ground at Sonny's feet. His outstretched hand remains in Sonny's. Sonny drops the hand, bends down for a closer look. The doctor is obviously dead. Sonny stares at the corpse numbly.

74 INT. CORRIDOR - ON BOOKER 74

waiting patiently with eyes closed. Sonny comes out of Dr. Maneet's door.

(CONTINUED)

74 CONTINUED: 74

SONNY
Booker, I hate to interrupt your dreams of being tall, but you better get in here.

Booker jumps up, goes to the door and reacts.

BOOKER
What'd you do to him?

SONNY
Liked him.

DISSOLVE TO:

75 EXT. BANK OF STREAM - TWO HOURS LATER 75

Sonny is sitting under a beautiful weeping willow feeding a Twinkie to two lovely swans gliding tranquilly in a glass-smooth pond. After a moment, Marlon comes up silently and stands beside Sonny. Marlon is a little bruised, bandaged and has his wrist in a cast. Sonny knows he's there but keeps his gaze on the lake. He breaks off half the Twinkie and hands it to Marlon. Marlon nibbles on it as Sonny continues to feed the swans.

SONNY
Dying didn't seem to hurt that Dr. Maneet at all. He just looked funny and keeled over.
(shakes head)
But up until then he was happy. He found reasons to live. Maybe watching two swans is reason enough to stay alive.

He looks at swans fondly. Suddenly, they begin fighting over a piece of the Twinkie, getting vicious and ugly as they peck and flap their wings at each other. Sonny and Marlon back away from the ugly scene. It depresses Sonny.

MARLON
They mate for life, you know.

SONNY
I wish I was dead.

MARLON
You would be if it weren't for my clumsy efforts.

(CONTINUED)

75 CONTINUED: 75

SONNY
Marlon, quit putting yourself down.

MARLON
You're right! Why waste time talking about a piece of shit like me. I've got something for you.

Marlon proudly pulls out a length of rope with a noose on the end, from behind his back.

SONNY
For me?

MARLON
A way out.

SONNY
(gulps)
Hanging?

MARLON
Uh, huh. You won't have to do anything but stand still. I'll do the rest.

Marlon climbs up the tree and begins looping one end of the rope around a limb. Sonny watches.

MARLON
(continuing)
Hanging... it's simple... it's quiet... it's cheap... There's a reason these things become a tradition.

SONNY
I wonder if it hurts?

MARLON
Are you changing your mind again?

SONNY
No... no. It's just that that doctor was so well adjusted right up to the minute he croaked. Why can't I be like that?

MARLON
I understand he had a disease much less painful than yours.

(CONTINUED)

75 CONTINUED: (2) 75

SONNY
True.

MARLON
He also had four children and a wife of thirty-five years. You have no family life.

SONNY
True.

MARLON
He did meaningful work, enriching his own life and helping others. You sell lakeside lots where there's no lake.

SONNY
Thanks for the pep talk, Marlon.

Marlon holds the noose out invitingly and Sonny swaggers fearlessly under it, but it's too high to get his neck into.

MARLON
Wait. You'll climb on my shoulders.

Marlon gets out of the tree and with some effort, Sonny climbs on his shoulders. They position themselves under the noose and Sonny slips it on.

SONNY
How are we going to do this?

MARLON
I just step out from under you.

SONNY
Isn't the hangee usually sitting on a horse?

MARLON
A horse? A Pollack? What's the difference? You want a horse? You got a horse.

Marlon whinnies, rears back and gallops out from under Sonny. Sonny goes plummeting to the ground.

76 thru 79 OMITTED

76 thru 79

80 ANGLE ON ROPE 80

It has been looped loosely and badly around the tree limb. It spins and unravels.

81 BACK TO SCENE 81

Sonny falls but his feet reach the ground... barely. He dances on tippy-toes to keep from strangling. The rest of him is being stretched to the limit between the ground and the tree limb.

SONNY
Arghhh...

Horrified, Marlon scrambles back up the tree, unties the knot and begins pulling the rope tighter, trying to hang his friend. Sonny, meanwhile, is fighting back, pulling at the noose, grabbing onto the tree, anything to keep from dangling in mid-air.

MARLON
Sonny, you're resisting again!

SONNY
Argggh! Grrrghhh!

MARLON
Yes, you are!

Marlon gives the rope a tremendous yank, causing the rope to snap.

Marlon's grip on the rope slackens and Sonny falls free. Sonny immediately pounces upon the chest of Marlon. Sonny is furious. X

SONNY
Why did you stop? I told you not to stop. You almost had me... Next time, don't stop, no matter what I say or do... understand?

MARLON
I think I do. X

SONNY
I think you don't. Marlon, I'm gonna have to do this thing myself. X X X

Sonny looks around for a way out. X X

81A SONNY'S POV 81A

A Japanese gardener has pulled up and is taking some plants and manure sacks from his beat-up old truck.

81B BACK TO SCENE 81B

SONNY
Bye, Marlon. X

Sonny dashes off, throwing off the rope. We HOLD on Marlon. X X

MARLON X
I failed again. X
(other voice) X
What else is new? X
(then) X
Not this time. X

Sonny confiscates the truck from the bewildered gardener. Sonny mashes the truck into gear and the truck starts to lurch forward. Marlon has hurled himself onto the back of the truck.

CUT TO:

81C ON JAPANESE GARDENER 81C

The Japanese gardener lowers the sack of shit and sees his truck vanishing down the road. He curses in Japanese.

81D ON TRUCK 81D

Sonny moving fast, thinking he's scot free, unaware Marlon has jumped into the back of the truck.

82 EXT. LA PLAYA GATE 82

A touching scene is taking place at the entrance. Dr. Kling is supervising the admittance of a frightened OLD MAN.

(CONTINUED)

82 CONTINUED: 82

The Old Man's guilty SON and relieved DAUGHTER-IN-LAW watch as Booker lifts him from the car to a wheelchair.

OLD MAN
(to Booker)
Keep your hands off me, stubby!

SON
(to Kling)
He's not always this belligerent.

DAUGHTER
Sometimes he sleeps.

DR. KLING
Old people tend to be frightened of new situations. I'll calm him down.
(he crosses to the Old Man; talking to him like a child)
Now, now, Mister Furth, you just do what the nice nurse says and after dinner you'll get a nice surprise.

OLD MAN
What kind of surprise? A lobotomy? I want out of here, quack!
(he whacks Kling with his cane and yells at his son)
I'll die in here, son! And you'll be left alone to live with that hag from hell.

DR. KLING
Shame on you, Mr. Furth. Don't you understand that your children love you and are trying to help you?

The old guy whacks Kling again. Kling jumps safely back with the kids.

DR. KLING
(continuing)
I guess he doesn't.

82A ANGLE ON BRIDGE 82A

Booker pushing the Old Man ahead as Dr. Kling shows the lovely bridge and grounds to the Son and Daughter. A PATIENT is sitting on the bridge with a "fishing pole." There is no line, no tackle -- just a bamboo pole.

SON
It sure seems nice. Uh, are lots of the people here... you know...

Son twirls his finger at his temple. X

DR. KLING
Oh, no.

X
Kling smiles as they watch the Fisherman simulate X reeling in a "fish."

DR. KLING
(continuing)
Well, there's nobody dangerous.

83 ON TRUCK 83

Suddenly Sonny comes flying over the bridge and past Kling. Everybody reacts at the sight of the rampaging truck, leaping off the bridge... all except the Fisherman, who is "re-baiting" his "hook" with a non-existent "worm." X X

84 ON GATE 84

Sonny blasts through it, sending Marlon diving for cover in the back of the truck.

85 ON BRIDGE 85

Dr. Kling and the others emerge soaked from the water at the same time as the gardener comes up, tired from carrying the heavy sack and depressed to see his truck speeding off in the distance. He dumps the sack of manure in the drippy arms of Dr. Kling and sits down.

DR. KLING
(looking at sack)
Why does everybody dump their shit on me?!

86 EXT. ROAD - ON TRUCK 86

Sonny driving as Marlon creeps up to the cab of the truck, carrying the noose. He tries to jockey himself into position to lasso Sonny's neck without Sonny seeing him.

87 INT. TRUCK - ON SONNY 87

The noose dangles in the window but Sonny doesn't notice. His eyes are riveted on an impending disaster straight ahead.

88 SONNY'S POV 88

A car is coming down the narrow road, straight for him and not giving way.

89 INT. SPEEDING CAR 89

It's got a stencil of a big steering wheel on its side and a logo, "GO-SAFE DRIVING SCHOOLS."

(CONTINUED)

89 CONTINUED: 89

It's one of those training cars with two steering wheels, two gas pedals, and two sets of brakes. A battle is taking place between the terrified driving TEACHER and the little OLD LADY learning to drive, as they struggle with their separate steering wheels.

TEACHER
Pull over! Pull over!

OLD LADY
Guts is part of learning to drive!

90 ON THE TWO CARS 90

About to collide, Sonny swerves to the right. This action sends Marlon and the rope flying back into the back of the truck. The battling drivers in the other car swerve in the same direction as the pickup.

91 EXT. CONSTRUCTION SITE 91

Both vehicles careen towards a bunch of heavy construction equipment parked by the side of the road. Sonny sails right up and off a ramp. The other car goes burrowing into a mound of fill, kicking up clouds of dirt.

92 ON THE TRUCK 92

It lands with a WHOMP, sending Marlon (still holding the noose) flying out of the back of the truck. Sonny, supremely unaware of all this, is just happy to be alive as he speeds away.

SONNY
I'm glad I got out of that alive.
(suddenly realizes
maybe he isn't)
Well, I'm glad everybody else got out of it alive.

93 EXT. CONSTRUCTION SITE - ON DRIVING SCHOOL CAR 93

The car is still burrowing in the dirt as the Teacher and the Old Lady jump out. Marlon comes rushing up, holding the noose behind his back.

(CONTINUED)

93 CONTINUED: 93

MARLON
Run! Run! The Polish hangman has escaped!

TEACHER
The Polish Hangman?

MARLON
Yes, he's a killer and he's around here someplace!

Marlon gestures around with his hand holding the rope and noose. The Teacher and the Old Lady react and run off. Marlon giggles and gets in the car.

MARLON
(continuing; calling off)
Thanks. I'll fill it up.

Marlon opens the driver's side door, gets in, backs up and pursues Sonny.

93A SERIES OF SHOTS 93A

of Marlon keeping his distance, following Sonny in the pickup. At one point Sonny stops for passing traffic. Marlon, several cars back, also stops. A station wagon pulls up in the lane next to Marlon. The front window is open and a Doberman sticks his head out and snarls in Marlon's face. Marlon casually slides over to the right side of the car and uses the teacher's controls as traffic starts up and he continues following Sonny. X

CUT TO:

94 EXT. MARY ELLEN'S APARTMENT - A FEW MINUTES LATER 94

Sonny pulls the truck up in front of the house, gets out, looks furtively around and heads for her front door. After a beat Marlon pulls up, parks and hides behind a hedge near Sonny's truck.

95 ON MARY ELLEN'S DOOR 95

Sonny starts to knock, then sees that the key has been left in the door. He sighs, opens the door and enters.

96 INT. MARY ELLEN'S LIVING ROOM 96

In its usual state of disarray. Mary Ellen, dressed in white and looking virginal, is sipping a glass of wine at the sink when Sonny enters. She is shocked to see him, especially in hospital garb.

MARY ELLEN
Sonny! What are you doing here?

SONNY
(suspicious)
I got a better question. Where are you going all dressed up?

MARY ELLEN
To visit you in the hospital.

SONNY
Oh.

MARY ELLEN
Why aren't you there? I mean what are you doing here?

SONNY
I thought it'd be easier if I visited you. You know how lousy your car runs...
(he gets a sudden, sharp pain)
... Another ten... I'm starting to look forward to the eights.

Sonny gets a little dizzy and has to steady himself to get up from the bed. Mary Ellen comes over and feels his feverish head.

MARY ELLEN
Oh, babe... can I get you something?

SONNY
You got any milk?

MARY ELLEN
(sad)
No.

SONNY
Anything cold... Coke, orange juice, apple juice...

(CONTINUED)

96 CONTINUED: 96

MARY ELLEN
Damn... I don't have that. Can I get you something else?

SONNY
(mad)
Mary Ellen, there isn't anything else!

He starts to cough and has to sit down. Mary Ellen rushes and gets a glass of water, brings it to him, stroking his hair as he starts to drink.

SONNY
(continuing)
Honey, if you're going to use jelly glasses you should wipe out the jelly before... aw, forget it.

He hugs her.

MARY ELLEN
Sonny, you should be in the hospital, shouldn't you?

SONNY
No, no... no more other people telling me what to do with my life... or death.

Sonny exits into the bedroom. She follows.

97 INT. MARY ELLEN'S BEDROOM 97

Sonny begins tearing open drawers, searching for something. The room is a shambles even without Sonny's efforts.

MARY ELLEN
What are you looking for?

SONNY
My clothes.

Mary Ellen picks up a bunch of his clothes from a wadded pile lying in the corner of the closet.

MARY ELLEN
Here's your clothes. I ironed them.

(CONTINUED)

97 CONTINUED: 97

SONNY
(still searching drawers)
You know what I'm looking for. Where is it?

MARY ELLEN
I hid it.

Mary Ellen's eyes dart to the bathroom. Sonny catches this and runs to the bathroom. We HOLD on a terrified Mary Ellen as we HEAR tremendous CRASHING, SHOVING OF TRASH, BANGING, SLAMMING and CAT YOWLING coming from the bathroom. Then there is a long silence. Mary Ellen grows even more apprehensive. Sonny emerges from the bathroom with a grin and the gun... a .38 automatic.

SONNY
In the shower, under the vent.

MARY ELLEN
How'd you find it?

SONNY
Finding the gun was easy. Finding the shower was tough.

MARY ELLEN
I'm calling the police.

SONNY
(pointing gun at her)
One move and I'll shoot...

She ignores this, picks up the phone. He turns the gun on his own head.

SONNY
(continuing)
... myself.

This stops her.

SONNY
(continuing)
That's right, baby, touch that phone and I splatter my brains all over your walls.
(looks at stained walls)
Of course on your walls nobody would notice.

(CONTINUED)

97 CONTINUED: (2) 97

MARY ELLEN
Sonny, you are driving me crazy!

Sonny starts getting dressed in his street clothes, keeping the gun to his own head... a bizarre sight.

SONNY
You won't have to put up with me much longer.

MARY ELLEN
Oh, Sonny... I feel so awful... sometimes I think if I could've loved you more... maybe... maybe you wouldn't be dying. Maybe I caused it.

SONNY
Don't be silly. You can't give somebody a blood disease. It's a gift from God.

MARY ELLEN
But if I would've been more what you wanted... given in more... something.

SONNY
No, honey... no. There's nothing you could've done to...
(suddenly)
... Maybe if you would've come at least once.
(catches himself)
No, no... Don't blame yourself, girl. You know... with all my whining and moaning... I think I had more fun in this relationship than you did.

Mary Ellen can only shake her head "no" as she struggles not to cry.

SONNY
(continuing)
Yes. Yes. Maybe the reason I loved you is 'cause I couldn't have you completely. You gotta admit that sounds like me.

He finishes dressing, takes gun down and comes over to caress her and stop her tears.

(CONTINUED)

97 CONTINUED: (3)

97

SONNY
(continuing)
And with all the shit, I was always turned on. That's worth a lot, darling.

Mary Ellen nods silently. Sonny gazes at her.

SONNY
(continuing)
I just wish you'd try to understand what I'm doing now... this suicide.

MARY ELLEN
I think I'm starting to, Sonny. I do. I've been selfish trying to keep you here a little longer. You do what you have to do.

SONNY
You mean it's okay with you for me to commit suicide?

MARY ELLEN
(tearfully)
Yes...

SONNY
Baby...

He gives her a tender, tender kiss... but when he pulls away his face has darkened.

SONNY
(continuing)
You could never let me kill myself if you really loved me.

MARY ELLEN
(screams)
Sonny... You're crazy! I can't please you! Stop picking on me!

SONNY
I'm sorry, honey. Bye.

He starts to go. She holds him and starts to cry.

MARY ELLEN
Sonny, don't go yet.

(CONTINUED)